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Aruba TODAY

On Top Of The News Email: news@arubatoday.com website: www.arubatoday.com Tel: +297 582-7800 Thursday, March 5, 2015



Mailer Daemon

In this October 2011 photo, then-Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton checks her Blackberry from a desk inside a C-17 military plane upon her departure from Malta, in the Mediterranean Sea, bound for Tripoli, Libya. Clinton used a personal email account during her time as secretary of state, rather than a government-issued email address, potentially hampering efforts to archive official government documents required by law. Clinton's office said nothing was illegal or improper about her use of the non-government account and that she believed her business emails to State Department and other .gov accounts would be archived in accordance with government rules.

(AP Photo/Kevin Lamarque)

Clinton Email Revelation Catches Democrats Off Guard

**JACK GILLUM
TED BRIDIS
Associated Press**
WASHINGTON (AP) — Hillary Rodham Clinton ran her own personal computer system for handling emails while serving as secretary of state, according to In-

ternet records reviewed by The Associated Press. The practice offered a measure of privacy to one of the world's most scrutinized women, but could subject her to more criticism ahead of a likely presidential campaign. Clinton's email prac-

tices attracted attention this week when The New York Times reported that she had exclusively used a personal email account for State Department business. A Clinton spokesman said that wasn't improper, and that emails would be ar-

chived in accordance with government rules. Republicans are signaling that questions about Clinton's use of a private email account while she was secretary of state will follow her into her widely anticipated presidential campaign.

Republican leaders, who control the investigative powers of Congress, say the revelations reaffirm their long-held portrayal of Bill and Hillary Clinton as secretive and playing by their own rules.

Continued on page 3

Kerry pushes back on Israeli criticism of Iran talks

**GEORGE JAHN
MATTHEW LEE
Associated Press**

MONTREUX, Switzerland (AP) — U.S. officials sought Wednesday to tamp down expectations of a substantial preliminary nuclear deal with Iran by the March deadline while working to move past the political dust kicked up by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's criticism of an emerging agreement's contours.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said Washington was well aware of the potential nuclear danger Iran poses to countries in the region and will endorse only an agreement that seriously and verifiably crimps Tehran's ability to make atomic arms.

"We continue to be focused on reaching a good deal, the right deal, that closes off any paths that Iran could have towards fissile material for a weapon and that protects the world from the enormous threat that we all know a nuclear-armed Iran would pose," Kerry told reporters at the end of meetings with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

The Iranian diplomat told NBC News on Wednesday, "We believe that we are very close, very close." The sides hope to have a progress report by late March allowing them to finesse details into a final pact by June. But a senior U.S. official appeared to walk back from the sig-

nificance of that first stage, describing it as only "an understanding that's going to have to be filled out with lots of detail" by the June final target date.

The official's comments

he expected "an agreement on substance" by March. Western and Iranian negotiators said then they would use the time between March and June only "if necessary ... to fi-

joint houses of Congress Tuesday, the U.S. official said senior Israeli officials would be briefed by secure phone by top U.S. negotiators on the latest round. Still the Netanyahu speech



Secretary of State John Kerry delivers remarks at the conclusion of another round of nuclear negotiations with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, on Wednesday, March 4, 2015, in Montreux, Switzerland. Kerry left the talks in Montreux with Iran and headed to Saudi Arabia to ease Gulf Arab concerns about an emerging deal and discuss ways to calm instability in the troubled region. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

could be an attempt to stretch the interpretation of what should be achieved by March, allowing further negotiations even if nothing more is achieved than a vague declaration.

They contrast sharply with what the West laid down earlier.

Justifying an extension of the talks on Nov. 24, Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond of Britain — one of the five powers backing the U.S. at the talks — said

nalize any possible remaining technical and drafting work."

The U.S. official, who demanded anonymity in line with State Department rules, said President Barack Obama will make a call on whether to continue into June once he sees the March assessment from U.S. negotiators.

Playing down the prospects of any lasting damage to U.S.-Israeli ties caused by Netanyahu's speech to the

is likely to further embolden critics in U.S. Congress who fear the U.S. may accept terms too lenient on Iran. He told Congress Tuesday that the agreement taking shape is dangerous and would allow Iran the ability to develop nuclear weapons.

Last week, senators introduced legislation to give Congress a say over any deal, and Republicans are trying to get it passed even as the talks continue. □

Sen. Democratic chief wants delay on deal with Iran

**ERICA WERNER
Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Key Senate Democrats led by Minority Leader Harry Reid announced their opposition Wednesday to fast action on a bill giving Congress final say on any nuclear deal with Iran.

The development appeared likely to upend Republican plans to move swiftly on the bill following Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Tuesday speech to Congress in which he railed against the emerging agreement.

"I think we are better off on things relating to the Iran deal to wait until we see if there can be something negotiated," Reid said in an interview with The Associated Press.

"And if there is something negotiated which allows a deal, then we should all jump in with all the energy we have. But until then I think it takes away from the fact that we might get a deal that's a good deal."

Reid also used the interview to throw cold water on the chances for Congress passing legislation to authorize military force against Islamic State fighters, and he discussed his eye injury, which he said is improving though it remains uncertain if he will fully regain vision in his right eye. Not long after Reid made his comments, the Iran bill's chief Democratic sponsor, Sen. Robert Menendez, sent a letter to Republican Majority Leader Mitch McConnell along with other Democrats announcing they would not vote in favor of the bill until after a March 24 deadline for a framework for a nuclear deal with Tehran.

The senators criticized McConnell for moving to bring the bill directly to the floor without going through the committee process. They said that route "suggests that the goal of this maneuver is to score partisan political points, rather than pursue a substantive strategy to counter Iran's nuclear ambitions." □

Netanyahu:

US speech gave 'practical alternative' to Iran deal

**DANIEL ESTRIN
Associated Press**

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Wednesday his speech to the U.S. Congress offered a "practical alternative" to a possible Iranian nuclear deal, while opinion polls showed his party received a slight bump following his address ahead of the country's March 17 election.

U.S. President Barack

Obama said the Israeli leader had offered no viable alternative to preventing Iran from getting nuclear weapons, saying "there was nothing new" in Netanyahu's speech Tuesday.

In a statement released after he landed in Israel, Netanyahu said the alternative deal he presented in Congress would make it harder for Iran to build a nuclear bomb.

"I proposed a practical

alternative that through tougher restrictions would extend the breakout time, by years, that it would take Iran to reach a nuclear weapon if it decides to breach the agreement," he said.

He said his proposal also would maintain restrictions until Tehran stops "its sponsorship of terrorism around the world, its aggression against its neighbors and its calls for Israel's destruction."

He said he received "very encouraging" responses from Democrats and Republicans to his speech.

Netanyahu's contentious speech to Congress took place despite objections from the White House, aggravating his already-strained relations with Obama.

The West fears Iran could build an atomic bomb with its nuclear program. Iran insists its program is for peaceful purposes. □



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Clinton email revelation catches Democrats off guard

Continued from Front

Democrats dismiss the accusations as trivial and question whether the emails will resonate with voters in an election 20 months away.

But as the presidential nominating season begins, Clinton's use of a personal email account for State Department business has stoked questions about transparency that threaten to cloud her early steps as the Democratic Party's overwhelming favorite White House prospect.

In particular, they question whether she has been forthcoming with a Republican-led congressional investigation into the attack on the U.S. diplomatic compound in Benghazi, Libya, in 2012, when Clinton headed the State Department. The department says Clinton has turned over 300 emails to the committee conducting the investigation.

Clinton has not described her motivation for using a private email account —



In this September 2012 photo, then-Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton speaks at the State Department in Washington. Clinton used a personal email account during her time as secretary of state, rather than a government-issued email address. Deputy State Department spokesperson Marie Harf says the department asked former secretaries of state last year for records that should be preserved. In response to that request, Clinton provided emails from her time as the nation's top diplomat.

(AP Photo/Alex Brandon)

hdr22@clintonemail.com, which traced back to her own private email server registered under an apparent pseudonym — for official State Department

business. A number of federal and state officials have used private email accounts for official business. But generally they rely on conventional email provid-

ers, such as those offered by Microsoft and Google. What is extraordinary in Clinton's case is the use of a server traced back to an Internet service registered

to the home she shares with former President Bill Clinton outside New York City.

That would give her more control over limiting access to her message archives. It could help her fend off government or private subpoenas in criminal, administrative or civil cases.

A spokesman for Clinton did not respond to requests seeking comment from the AP on Tuesday. Clinton ignored the issue during a speech Tuesday night.

Clinton's official emails would be accessible to anyone who requested copies under the Freedom of Information Act. Under the law, anyone can compel the government to turn over copies of federal records for zero or little cost. Since Clinton effectively retained control over emails in her private account even after she resigned in 2013, the government would have to negotiate with Clinton to turn over messages it can't already retrieve from the inboxes of federal employees she emailed. □

Benghazi panel to issue subpoenas for more Clinton emails

DONNA CASSATA

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The special House committee investigating the 2012 attacks on the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya, will issue subpoenas for former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton's personal emails, congressional aides said Wednesday.

The move comes amid the disclosure that Clinton, the

potential 2016 Democratic presidential candidate, relied exclusively on a personal email account during her tenure as the nation's top diplomat. The committee, which already has tens of thousands of emails from the Obama administration, is seeking more information. The committee is investigating the Sept. 11, 2012, attack on the U.S. facility that killed four Americans,

including Ambassador Chris Stevens. Clinton was secretary of state at the time.

The aides said that possibly as early as Wednesday, the committee would seek the additional material from Clinton.

The aides spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss the committee's actions.

Without confirming the latest development, a Republican on the Benghazi committee said Clinton is "known for her secrecy, but this shows just what lengths the Clintons will go to."

Rep. Martha Roby, a Republican, added, "It's not a random personal account, but a carefully calculated system to avoid using public, government-archived email."

The Associated Press reported on Wednesday that a computer server that sent and received Clinton's emails — on a private account she used exclusively for official business while secretary of state — traced back to an Internet service registered to her New York home.

The Washington Post first reported about the subpoenas. □

Supreme Court: Justices appear split over health law

ADAM LIPTAK

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WASHINGTON - The Supreme Court on Wednesday seemed bitterly divided during heated arguments over the fate of President Barack Obama's health care law.

As expected, the court's four liberal members voiced strong support for the administration's position. But the administration must almost certainly capture the vote of either Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. or Justice Anthony M. Kennedy to prevail. The chief justice said almost nothing.

Kennedy asked questions suggesting that he was uncomfortable with the

"This is a straightforward question of statutory interpretation," he said, referring to a provision in the law that seems to say that subsidies are available only to people living where the insurance marketplaces, known as exchanges, had been "established by the state."

Carvin faced a barrage of questions from the court's liberal wing focusing on the health care law as a whole.

"We don't look at four words," Justice Elena Kagan said. "We look at the whole text."

Justice Stephen G. Breyer echoed the point.

"If you want to go into the context" of the law, he told

told Carvin.

Kagan made a similar point, saying that a properly drafted law would have made the choice more stark. "That's not the clarity with which we expect the government to speak when it's upsetting federal-state relations," she said.

Both lawyers discussed whether the four Virginians challenging the law had suffered the sort of direct injury that gave them standing to sue. But the court did not seem likely to dismiss the case on standing grounds.

Verrilli said the challengers' interpretation "produces an incoherent statute that doesn't work."

Justice Antonin Sca-

Obama signs U.S. Homeland Security funding bill into law

WASHINGTON (AP) —

President Barack Obama has signed a law funding the U.S. Homeland Security Department through the end of the budget year.

The president signed the bill Wednesday in the Oval Office with a small group of photographers present. The White House wouldn't permit reporters to attend. The House voted 257-167 Tuesday to approve the bill after a messy fight in Congress. Republicans wanted to use the legislation to repeal Obama's

executive actions on immigration. Congress extended funding for one week just ahead of last Friday's deadline, then Republicans relented Tuesday and approved full-year funding without the immigration conditions.

Obama has said Congress took far too long to approve the funding. Without action, funding would have expired at midnight Friday, furloughing some workers while requiring others to work without receiving their paychecks. □

AP: Senate fails to override the Obama Keystone veto

CORAL DAVENPORT

© 2015 New York Times

WASHINGTON - The Senate on Wednesday failed to override President Barack Obama's veto of a bill that would have approved construction of the controversial Keystone XL oil pipeline. A bipartisan majority of senators were unable to reach the two-thirds majority required to undo a presidential veto. The vote was 62-37.

The measure's defeat was widely expected, and marks the latest twist in the clash over the proposed 1,179-mile pipeline, which would move about 800,000 barrels of carbon-heavy petroleum per day from the oil sands of Alberta, Canada, to ports and refineries on the Gulf Coast.

Republicans used the debate on the vote to attack Obama for his years of delay in making a decision about the pipeline. The State Department has the authority to approve or deny the project because it crosses an international border, but the ultimate decision on the project is expected to come from the president. "The president's veto of the bipartisan Keystone bill represents a victory for partisanship and for powerful special interests," said the Senate majority leader, Mitch McConnell, R-Ky. "The president's veto of the bipartisan Keystone bill represents a defeat for

jobs, infrastructure, and the middle class."

The Senate vote ensures that the first significant veto of Obama's administration will stand - and also that his future vetoes are likely to withstand similar efforts. However, Republicans said they intended to continue to find ways to bring the Keystone bill back to the president's desk.

"We will continue working on this important infrastructure project," said Sen. John Hoeven, R-N.D., a leading sponsor of the Keystone measure. "Another option is to attach this legislation to other energy, infrastructure or appropriations legislation that the president won't want to veto. The will of the American people and Congress is clear."

Obama indicated that he vetoed the bill not because of the pipeline itself, but rather because the bill would have removed his authority to make the final decision on the project.

People close to Obama said he would make a decision soon. In an interview Monday with Reuters, Obama said that he could issue the final decision within "weeks or months" - or "by the end of my administration."

The pipeline has been under review since TransCanada, the company seeking to build the project, applied in 2008 for a State Department permit to build the cross-border project. □



Affordable Care Act supporters demonstrate outside the Supreme Court building, where a challenge to the law was being heard, on Capitol Hill in Washington, March 4, 2015. Though a ruling in King v. Burwell could carry huge consequences for many states, it cannot wipe President Barack Obama's signature law off the books entirely. (Doug Mills/The New York Times)

administration's reading of the statute. But he added that the challengers' reading posed problems, too.

"Your argument raises a serious constitutional question," he told their lawyer. Solicitor General Donald B. Verrilli Jr. argued for the Obama administration, facing Michael A. Carvin, who represented the plaintiffs in another challenge to the law that reached the Supreme Court in 2012.

The argument, which lasted 80 minutes rather than the usual hour, started with a presentation from Carvin that was tied closely to the text of the law.

Carvin, "at that point your argument really is weaker." Justice Sonia Sotomayor said Carvin's reading of the law would have devastating consequences. "We're going to have the death spiral that this system was enacted to avoid," she said. Kennedy repeatedly asked whether Congress had the constitutional authority to make states choose between setting up their own insurance exchanges and letting their citizens lose tax subsidies to help them buy insurance.

"There is a serious constitutional problem here if we adopt your position," he

lia responded that the law "means what it says" even if that has negative consequences. He and Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr. added that Congress and the states could promptly address a ruling rejecting the subsidies. Alito said the Supreme Court might even defer the effective date of its decision.

Kennedy, who had asked tough questions of Carvin, did not seem satisfied with Verrilli's argument either. Verrilli's reading of the law, Kennedy said, "seems to me to go in the wrong direction, not the right direction, for your case." □



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Defense: Tsarnaev carried out Boston Marathon bombing



A federal police officer stands near protestor Jose Briceno, right, outside federal court, Wednesday, March 4, 2015, in Boston, on the first day of Boston Marathon Bombing suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev's federal death penalty trial. Tsarnaev is charged with conspiring with his brother to place two bombs near the marathon finish line in April 2013, killing three and injuring 260 people.

(AP Photo/Michael Dwyer)

DENISE LAVOIE
Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — In a startling opening statement at the biggest U.S. terrorism trial in decades, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev's own lawyer told a jury that the 21-year-old former college student committed the Boston Marathon bombing.

"It WAS him," said defense attorney Judy Clarke, one of America's foremost death-penalty specialists. Three people were killed and more than 260 hurt when two shrapnel-packed pressure-cooker bombs exploded near the finish line on April 15, 2013. Tsarnaev, then 19, is accused of car-

rying out the attacks with 26-year-old Tamerlan, who was killed in a shootout and getaway attempt days later.

In a strategy aimed at saving Tsarnaev from a death sentence, she argued that he had fallen under the influence of his now-dead older brother, Tamerlan.

"The evidence will not establish and we will not argue that Tamerlan put a gun to Dzhokhar's head or that he forced him to join in the plan," Clarke said, "but you will hear evidence about the kind of influence that this older brother had." Federal prosecutors used their opening statements — along with chilling video and testimony from witnesses — to paint Tsarnaev as a cold-blooded killer and sketch a grisly picture of torn limbs, screams and the smell of sulfur and burned hair in the streets. Tsarnaev planted a bomb designed to "tear people apart and create a bloody spectacle," then hung out with his college buddies as if he didn't have a care in the world, federal prosecutor William Weinreb said.

"He believed that he was a soldier in a holy war against Americans," Weinreb said. "He also believed that by winning that victory, he had taken a step toward reaching paradise. That was his motive for committing these crimes."

A shaggy-haired, goateed Tsarnaev slouched in his seat and showed no reac-

tion as Weinreb spoke, not even when the prosecutor described how Tsarnaev ran over his brother with a stolen Mercedes and dragged the body 50 feet (15 meters) during the getaway.

About two dozen victims took up one entire side of the courtroom. Several hung their heads and appeared to fight back tears. Prosecutors contend the brothers — ethnic Chechens who arrived from Russia more than a decade ago — were driven by anger over U.S. wars in Muslim lands.

Because of a wealth of evidence against the younger brother — including a video of him leaving a backpack at the scene, and incriminating graffiti scrawled on the boat where he was captured — legal experts have said there is little chance of escaping conviction during the guilt-or-innocence phase of the trial.

Instead, they said, Tsarnaev's lawyers will concentrate on saving his life by arguing that the radicalized Tamerlan was the driving force in the plot. □

Police: Maryland shootings random; evoked DC sniper case

MEREDITH SOMERS
Associated Press

MILLERSVILLE, Maryland (AP) — A man accused of firing at five public places in Maryland, including a building at the National Security Agency, chose his targets at random, police said Wednesday.

County Chief Timothy Altomare said the shootings over the past week evoked memories of two snipers who killed 10 people in 2002 in the Washington

area. Despite the fear created by the latest shootings, Altomare said everyone is "alive and well."

"Most of us here probably, in some way, shape or form, are aware of the events 15 years ago with the D.C. sniper case," Altomare said at a news conference with officers from the FBI. "As soon as we started to hear about the possibility of this stuff being linked, we kicked every effort we had into overdrive."

That spurred a multi-jurisdictional manhunt that ended Tuesday in the capture of Hong Young, 35. He was charged with attempted murder and assault in the first shooting Feb. 24 near a mall. Police linked the other shootings by ballistic evidence or surveillance video.

Police spokesman T.J. Smith said Young was being monitored at a local hospital and was under police guard.

Authorities didn't know if he had an attorney.

Two officers took him into custody after spotting a 1999 Lincoln Town Car seen near the site of the first shooting. Smith said stores were closed, so the vehicle's presence was suspicious. The officers approached the car and saw shell casings and a handgun inside.

Investigators later matched the casings and .380 semi-automatic handgun to

last week's shooting. One person was hurt by broken glass from a vehicle window in that case. Another person was similarly injured Tuesday in a shooting along a busy highway.

No one was hurt Tuesday in the NSA shooting or at Monday shootings outside at Walmart in Laurel and a movie theater in Columbia. The sites are within a 12-mile (20-kilometer) radius in the Baltimore-Washington area. □

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Deal with 72 Asiana passengers leaves cases unresolved

SUDHIN THANAWALA

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) —

While 72 passengers have settled their personal injury claims stemming from the crash of an Asiana Airlines flight in San Francisco two years ago, others are continuing their legal fight with the airliner and others involved in the accident that killed three Chinese teenagers and injured nearly 200 people.

There were 291 passengers and 16 crew members aboard the Boeing 777 flight that originated in South Korea when it slammed into a sea wall on approach on July 6, 2013.

Dozens of lawsuits have been filed in the United States, but many foreigners aboard the flight are prevented by international



In this July 2013 aerial file photo, the wreckage of Asiana Flight 214 lies on the ground after it crashed at the San Francisco International Airport in San Francisco. On Tuesday, March 3, 2015, more than 70 passengers aboard an Asiana Airlines flight that crashed in San Francisco two years ago have reached a settlement in their lawsuits against the airline.

(AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez)

treaty from suing the airliner in this country and must pursue their legal claims in Asia and elsewhere.

Additionally, a Chinese family is suing the city of San Francisco for wrongful death after a rescue truck responding to the crash accidentally ran over and killed Ye Mengyuan, 16, as she lay injured on the tarmac.

The family's lawyer didn't return a phone call.

Arthur Wolk, a lawyer representing an American couple injured in the crash, said Wednesday that Asiana and its insurers have not yet made sufficient offers to settle the lawsuit he filed in January.

"They're not being realistic," Wolk said, declining to disclose details of the settlement discussions. □

Senator asks for federal probe of Lumber Liquidators

NEW YORK (AP) — A U.S. senator is requesting that three federal agencies investigate Lumber Liquidators

following a "60 Minutes" report that said the company's laminate flooring made in China may not

meet California's health and safety standards.

The "60 Minutes" report, which aired Sunday on CBS, said that Lumber Liquidators' laminate flooring made in China contains high levels of formaldehyde, a carcinogen. Lumber Liquidators says that it complies with applicable regulations for its products, including California standards for formaldehyde emissions for composite wood products.

U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson, a Florida Democrat, sent a letter Wednesday to the heads of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Federal Trade Commission in which he called for independent testing of the

laminate flooring to see if it potentially poses a health risk to the public.

"Because this could affect millions of homeowners, it's imperative we get some answers quickly," Nelson said. A statement from the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation said that the senator — the committee ranking member — also wants to know if Lumber Liquidators made potentially false marketing claims about the flooring's compliance with the California formaldehyde safety standard. Lumber Liquidators said Wednesday it supports the development of clear, practical and uniform regulations.

"Lumber Liquidators shares Sen. Bill Nelson's desire

for consumer safety," the Toano, Virginia, company said. It added that in that past few years it has been "actively engaged" with the California Air Resources Board and the Environmental Protection Agency.

The company said separately that it withdrew from a Raymond James conference for institutional investors Wednesday. The company said it will provide a business update on March 12. Shares of Lumber Liquidators Holdings Inc. dropped \$5.14, or 13 percent, to close Wednesday at \$35.64. Earlier shares traded at \$35.40, their lowest point since July 2012.

The stock is down 48 percent since reports of the product-safety concerns surfaced last week. □

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US Financial Front:

Why the outlook for global economy has brightened

C. S. RUGABER
AP Economy Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — From the United States to Asia to Europe, a global economy that many had feared was faltering appears poised for a resurgence on the strength of cheap oil and falling interest rates. That's the strikingly upbeat view of economists surveyed by The Associated Press, who no longer see Europe's financial crisis, the U.S. housing market or congressional gridlock as the threats they appeared to be last year.

"The U.S. is doing well, you're getting a lot of good news in Europe," said Nariman Behravesh, chief economist at IHS Global Insight. "The global economy is gaining traction."

U.S. consumers are feeling flusher, thanks to lower gas prices, a burst of hiring and long-awaited if still-modest pay raises for many. Their spending is expected to boost growth this year in the United States and overseas.

The brighter outlook marks a turnaround from last fall, when a looming war in Ukraine, the rise of the Islamic State terror group and a reluctance by the European Central Bank to expand its stimulus efforts led analysts to downgrade their view of the global economy.

Weaker growth in China has also hurt export-

ing countries from Latin America to Australia that had long benefited from China's appetite for farm products, copper, iron ore and other commodities. China's growth decelerated last year to its slowest pace in a quarter-century. Still, most economists expect China to avoid a further slowdown. Its central bank cut rates last week-end for the second time in three months to try to accelerate growth. Data released Wednesday in Europe underscored the growing optimism about that region's long-troubled economy. Retail sales in the 19 nations that share the euro currency jumped in January by the most in a year and a half. Spending at retailers has soared in the past 12 months by the most in a decade.

A separate report from financial information company Markit found that the eurozone economy grew in February at its fastest rate in seven months. The report was based on surveys of purchasing managers at manufacturing and service companies.

The AP surveyed nearly three dozen corporate, Wall Street and academic economists from Feb. 19 to 25. A majority said they thought struggling economies in Europe and Japan would benefit from lower-priced energy and ultra-low loan rates engineered

by central banks.

Behravesh predicted that freer-spending U.S. consumers would provide help. He noted that their collective spending represents a bigger force than any other nation's economy. American consumers have benefited from the 1 million-plus jobs U.S. employers have added in the past three months. More than

from lower gas prices. But even that's a hopeful sign: It means consumers — who fuel about 70 percent of the U.S. economy — have more money to spend in coming months. The U.S. savings rate reached a two-year high in January. Among the other views the AP's survey of economists revealed:

— The Federal Reserve will

— The outlook for broad-based U.S. pay increases is brightening. A majority think the average hourly wage will begin growing at least 3 percent a year sometime between the middle of this year and mid-2016.

— Republican control of both chambers of Congress, arrayed against Democratic President Barack Obama, means political gridlock will persist. Yet the economists don't think a congressional standoff will hurt the economy.

— With a rise in the number of Americans forming households, home construction should accelerate this year and help stimulate economic growth.

— The Trans-Pacific Partnership, a trade deal the Obama administration is negotiating with Pacific Rim countries, would accelerate job growth without widening the U.S. trade deficit.

The economists' rosier outlook for a still-ailing European economy is based in part on the benefits of cheaper oil. Further help will come from a lower-valued euro, which boosts exports, particularly for an export powerhouse like Germany.

Banks in the eurozone are also lending a bit more. And the ECB has launched a stimulus program intended to lower borrowing rates and boost growth. □



An Indian laborer cuts iron rods at a construction site in Ahmadabad, India. From the United States to Asia to Europe, a global economy that many feared was at risk of stalling appears poised for resurgence on the strength of cheap oil and falling interest rates.
(AP Photo/Ajit Solanki)

3.2 million more Americans are earning paychecks than were 12 months ago. In January, U.S. gas prices reached a five-year low, though they've since rebounded. A gallon cost an average of \$2.44 nationwide Tuesday, more than a dollar cheaper than it did 12 months ago, according to AAA.

So far, many Americans have saved the extra cash

likely start raising its key short-term rate from record lows in September. That's a shift from the AP's previous survey last fall, when most of the economists predicted a rate hike in June. The plunge in energy prices, which has helped cut inflation further below the Fed's 2 percent target, has led many economists to push back their forecast for a rate increase.

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British citizen fighting with Kurds killed in Syria

BRAM JANSSEN DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) — A British citizen fighting alongside Kurdish forces against the Islamic State group has been killed in Syria, a Kurdish commander said Wednesday.

Konstandinos Erik Scurfield, an ex-Royal Marine, was shot dead March 2 in the front-line village of Tel Khu-zela, Kurdish commander Redor Khalil told The Associated Press.

Another foreign fighter battling with the Kurds, American Jordan Matson, said he was with the body on Wednesday and was working on getting the remains back to Britain.

"We're trying to make contact with his mother to see what her wishes are," Matson told the AP Wednesday. "Otherwise, he wished to be buried here under an olive tree." Matson said on his Facebook page that Scurfield also had Greek citizenship and had served in the Greek army and as a British Royal Marine. Scurfield was 25 years old.

Dozens of foreign fighters have traveled to Syria and neighboring Iraq to fight with Kurdish militias battling the Islamic State group. Matson and four other foreign nationals told the AP last month that they arranged to join Kurdish forces through the Facebook page run by the People's Protection Units, or YPG, the main Kurdish militia fighting in northern Syria.

At least one other foreign fighter, Australian Ashley Johnson, who went by the name of Ase, is known to have been killed fighting

alongside the Kurds.

The Islamic State group, which currently holds territory in a third of Iraq and Syria, has recruited thousands of foreign fighters, mainly from Europe and

are archeologists who live in a former farmhouse in the village of Royston. In an interview with Sky News on Wednesday, his mother said the family is "reeling" from the news. "His flame

and honor, and we are very proud of him," the family later said in a media statement. The British Foreign Office said it is aware of reports that a British national died in Syria. "As

confirmation of deaths or injuries and our options for supporting British nationals there are extremely limited," it said.

Dan Jarvis, the local member of parliament from Barnsley Central, where Scurfield is from, said Wednesday that the Briton traveled to Syria to provide humanitarian aid.

"My understanding was that he went there for honorable reasons," Jarvis told Sky News. "There are other ways in which people who have these legitimate concerns can make a contribution, supporting charities or NGOs."

"The advice is rightly not to go there," Jarvis added. Neither the U.S. nor the U.K. have banned citizens from fighting with militias against the Islamic State group, though both consider the Turkey-based Kurdistan Workers' Party, known as the PKK, a terrorist organization. The PKK, which waged a long and bloody insurgency against Ankara, is believed to have close ties to the YPG and is fighting alongside it in northern Iraq and in Syria. □



Kurdish fighters and foreign volunteers fighting together against the Islamic State group, including American citizen Jordan Matson, second right, Australian citizen volunteer Ase Johnson, right, and British citizen Konstandinos Erik Scurfield, foreground, pose for a group photo in Sinjar, Iraq. Scurfield was shot dead on Monday, March 2, 2015 in Syria, a Kurdish commander said Wednesday. At least one other foreign fighter, Australian Ase Johnson, is known to have been killed fighting alongside the Kurds.

(AP Photo courtesy Jordan Matson)

elsewhere in the Middle East. Scurfield's parents, Chris and Vicci Scurfield,

might have burned briefly but it burned brightly with love, courage, conviction

we do not have any representation in Syria it is extremely difficult to get any

Purported ISIS militants attack Libyan oil field

ESAM MOHAMED Associated Press

TRIPOLI, Libya (AP) — Militants purportedly from the Islamic State group attacked an oil field near Libya's central coast, prompting a counterattack by the country's Islamist-backed government that included airstrikes, an official said Wednesday.

The militants swept down from the city of Sirte to at-

tack the al-Dhahra oil field, trading fire with guards and blowing up residential and administrative buildings before retreating, said Mashallah al-Zewi, the oil minister in the Tripoli-based government.

"They surrounded the site from three different directions, and when guards ran out of ammunition, they stormed the place, looted everything and

then bombed the buildings, leaving them in ruins," he said.

All employees and workers, including foreigners, were safely evacuated, he said.

Al-Zewi said that the field is run by al-Waha oil company and other American companies.

Al-Waha said on its website that al-Dhahra is one of Libya's oldest fields, with

production starting in 1962. Libya's state-run National Oil Corporation runs the field.

Officials believe the same militants were behind the February attack on Libya's al-Mabrouk oil field that killed 10 guards and saw seven foreigners abducted, including three Filipinos. French oil giant Total SA says it worked at that field until 2013. □

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Coal mine blast kills at least 24 in war-torn east Ukraine



Ukrainian coal miners arrive at the Zasyadko mine, to assist in the search for bodies of colleagues following an explosion, in Donetsk, Ukraine, Wednesday, March 4, 2015. An explosion ripped through a coal mine before dawn Wednesday in war-torn eastern Ukraine, killing at least 24 miners underground, rebel and government officials said.

(AP Photo/Vadim Ghirda)

the overall number of confirmed dead to 24.

Under cover of darkness, a truck pulled up in the heavy rain to the mine's opening in preparation to take the bodies away. A woman emerging from the mine was heard wailing in grief from a distance. Rebel officials had said earlier that 32 workers were unaccounted for, suggesting 16 still remained trapped as of the evening. A news agency run by the separatist government reported that 14 people were injured in the accident.

Igor Murygin, a 42-year-old miner being treated for burns at a hospital in Donetsk, said he was blown off his feet by the explosion.

"When I came to, there was dust everywhere. People were groaning," said Murygin, who suffered burns over 20 percent of his body.

The mine had recently installed new equipment and nothing appeared to be out of order, he added. Speaking in Kiev, Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk accused rebels of preventing a team of 60 Ukrainian rescuers from reaching the mine to provide assistance. But leading rebel representative Denis Pushilin denied that Ukrainian authorities had offered any help.

"If we truly need assistance, we will turn to Russia," Pushilin was quoted as saying by the rebel-run Donetsk News Agency. □

NATALIYA VASILYEVA

Associated Press

DONETSK, Ukraine (AP) —

A rebel-held city scarred by months of conflict in eastern Ukraine suffered more tragedy Wednesday when a methane gas explosion in a coal mine killed at least 24 workers and left nine missing.

As rescue efforts stretched well past sundown, separatist authorities were accused by Ukraine's government of failing to do enough to save the lives of the miners.

The blast occurred before dawn more than 1,000 meters (3,200 feet) underground at the Zasyadko mine in the city of Donetsk in the coal-rich Donbass region that has seen nearly a year of bitter fighting by pro-Moscow rebels and Ukrainian troops that has killed more than 6,000 people.

Rebel officials said the accident caused by the ever-present danger of methane gas, rather than

artillery fire.

There were contradictory accounts of the toll of dead and missing by the rival authorities. The rebel government that controls Donetsk was slow to divulge information, while a senior official in the capital of Kiev was swift to give a death toll of 32, only to retract it several hours later. The blast occurred as 230 workers were in the mine, and nearly 200 of them were quickly evacuated, but uncertainty lingered throughout the day about dozens of others.

Rebel officials insisted into the afternoon that only one person had died. But a slightly wounded miner who gave his name only as Sergei told The Associated Press that he saw five bodies being pulled out. By nightfall, Yuliana Bedilko, a representative for the rebel-managed rescue services at the site of accident, said another 23 bodies had been located below ground, bringing

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Report: Killings continue in Colombia city at alarming rate

J. GOODMAN

Associated Press

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) — Criminal gangs continue to operate freely in the port city of Buenaventura, carrying out murders and dismembering victims at an alarming rate one year after Colombia created a special task force to curb violence there, Human Rights Watch says in a new report released Wednesday.

A year ago, President Juan Manuel Santos sent additional police and prosecutors to boost security in what has long been one of Colombia's most-violent cities and a haven for paramilitary groups and drug traffickers. Since then, murders have declined and arrests have gone up. But gangs comprised of former right-wing paramilitaries continue to

exert control over entire neighborhoods, extorting businesses at will and threatening women with rape, according to the advocacy group. The existence of so-called "chop-up houses" where victims are disappeared and dismembered in the city have been the focus of much of the attention on Buenaventura by the government and news media.

The remains of 32 such victims have been found in Buenaventura, at least 12 of them believed to have been killed after the task force was launched. Terrorized by the killings, an estimated 6,900 residents have fled Buenaventura in the past year, making the city Colombia's biggest source of internal refugees. Human Rights Watch was presenting the findings on

Wednesday in Buenaventura. The report says that the government needs to devote more resources to pursuing criminals in the impoverished city of 500,000 people. It adds that of the eight new prosecutors Santos sent to Buenaventura, only one is dedicated full-time to investigating disappearances and has a backlog of more than 400 such cases. □

Mexico authorities arrest Zetas leader Omar Trevino Morales

E. EDUARDO CASTILLO

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexican police and soldiers on Wednesday captured Omar Trevino Morales, widely considered to be the most important leader of the Zetas drug cartel that once carved a path of brutal bloodshed along the country's northern border with the U.S., a federal official said.

The official, who was not authorized to be quoted by name because of government policy, said the man known as "Z-42" was arrested in a pre-dawn raid in San Pedro Garza Garcia, a wealthy suburb of the northern city of Monterrey. The Mexican government had offered a 30-million peso (\$2 million) reward for his capture on weapons and organized crime charges.

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration had offered a \$5 million reward for his capture, saying he was wanted on drug-trafficking charges, but listed "Omar" as an alias and his given name as Alejandro. DEA



Mexican navy marines guard the area where clandestine mass graves were found near the town of La Joya, on the outskirts of Iguala, Mexico. Mexican police and soldiers on Wednesday captured Omar Trevino Morales, considered to be the most important leader of the Zetas drug cartel, a federal official said.

(AP Photo/Felix Marquez)

spokesman Rusty Payne confirmed they are the same person, and said "we certainly are excited and congratulate Mexico for another great arrest." The suspect is the brother of Miguel Angel Trevino

Morales, described as the most bloodthirsty leader of Mexico's most violent cartel. Miguel Angel was arrested in July 2013, almost a year after marines killed the Zetas' other biggest lead-

er, Heriberto Lazcano "El Lazca." Omar apparently took over leadership of the Zetas — a gang originally formed by deserters from an elite army unit — after his brother's arrest in 2013.

The Zetas left a trail of brutality, bloodshed and mutilated bodies across northern Mexico during their turf battles with the rival Gulf cartel. But much of the violence along Mexico's northeast border now is due to internal battles among Gulf cartel factions. The capture of Omar Trevino Morales follows Friday's arrest of another big cartel leader, Servando Gomez, known as "La Tuta." Gomez allegedly led the Knights Templar, a pseudo-religious drug gang that built up control of many sectors of the economy in the western state of Michoacan. The two arrests provided much-needed good news for the administration of Enrique Pena Nieto, battered by a series of scandals in recent months.

"The government needed to show that some of its policies were successful," said Raul Benitez, a security expert at Mexico's National Autonomous University. "And in this case, without doubt the strategy against the drug cartels is going well." □

Canadian man charged with causing St Lucia child's death

STAN BISHOP

Associated Press

CASTRIES, St. Lucia (AP) — A Canadian tourist has been charged with recklessly causing the death of a 4-year-old St. Lucian child who drowned off one of the Caribbean country's beaches last month, officials said Tuesday. The Royal St. Lucia Police Force identified the suspect as 33-year-old Sahab Jamshidi of Hamilton, Ontario.

He has been charged with causing the boy's death by negligence or recklessness on Feb. 22 off a beach in the southern town of Vieux Fort. Police allege that local child Terrel Joshua Elibox was at the beach when he was given a kite surfing ride by Jamshidi. During the ride, Terrel allegedly fell into the sea and submerged. His body was recovered two days later. Jamshidi made his first court appearance

on Tuesday but was not required to enter a plea. He was granted bail but required to surrender his travel documents and ordered to report to a police station each week until his case is resolved. His next hearing is next month. If convicted, he faces a life in prison in St. Lucia, a tourism-dependent island in the Eastern Caribbean. On a Facebook page defending the suspect, a Canadian friend as-

serts Jamshidi was trying to help the child after he "saw a child bobbing in the water barely swimming." "He had tried to save him but ultimately the waves stripped the boy and his board away from him," Hamilton resident Stephen Verbeek said on his Facebook page in support of his friend. Few specifics were disclosed at a Tuesday press conference by police in St. Lucia. Deputy Police Commis-

sioner Frances Henry only said "there are no special cases" and investigators will pursue the case vigorously. Jamshidi was described as a physician in a report by the Canadian Broadcasting Corp, but he is not listed as one in Ontario. The CBC says a man with the same name and age was awaiting medical residency in Canada after receiving medical training in the United States. □



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US pushes back on Venezuela's order to slash embassy staff

HANNAH DREIER
BRADLEY KLAPPER
Associated Press
CARACAS, Venezuela

(AP) — The United States late Tuesday pushed back against Venezuela's demand for a dramatic cut in the American diplomatic mission in Caracas. During a rare meeting Monday with the top American diplomat in Caracas, Foreign Minister Delcy Rodriguez gave the U.S. two weeks to come up with a plan to slash the size of its embassy from around 100 diplomats to 17.

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro had said over the weekend that he would seek parity between the number of U.S. diplomats in his country and Venezuelans in the United States. "They have 100 functionaries here. We have 17 there," told what was billed as "The Great Anti-Imperialist March." On Tuesday, State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf said the U.S. had noted in the meeting that Venezuela was wrong about the number of diplomats it has working in the U.S.



Venezuela's Foreign Relations Minister Delcy Rodriguez answers a few questions as she leaves a news conference after her private meeting with U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Lee McClenny in Caracas, Venezuela. The United States late Tuesday pushed back against Venezuela's demand for a dramatic cut in the American diplomatic mission in Caracas. (AP Photo/Ariana Cubillos)

"The numbers the Venezuelan government has offered regarding the size of its mission in the United States dramatically understates the number of Venezuelan diplomats," she said.

In addition to its embassy in Washington, Venezuela has eight consulates in the U.S. A roster of Venezuelan functionaries on the State Department website lists

43 staffers: 19 diplomats in Washington and 24 in the other offices around the country.

Harf said no American diplomats had been ordered to leave Venezuela. The U.S. was only ordered to submit a plan within 15 days on how it would reduce staffing at the embassy in Caracas and would respond "after due consideration of their request," she said.

In the evening, the U.S. Embassy issued an advisory calling attention to the recent detention of several U.S. citizens in Venezuela, and warning that if arrested, Americans might be refused the right to speak with consular representatives. Venezuela detained four missionaries last week for reasons that remain unclear. They returned home to North Dakota Tuesday.

The U.S. and this socialist-governed South American country have not exchanged ambassadors since 2010. Maduro regularly rails against the U.S., accusing it of meddling in his country's affairs, and he has taken to leading weekly chants of "Gringo, go home!" He said the most recent crackdown on opponents was a response to the "continual coup" the U.S. has been supporting against his government, a charge that the U.S. calls a red herring to distract from domestic problems.

On Tuesday night, Maduro announced that the group of South American nations known as UNASUR will send a delegation to the county on Friday for the purpose of promoting peace and dialogue.

On Tuesday morning, Venezuela published regulations removing the U.S. from a list of countries whose citizens can travel here without obtaining a visa. It's unclear how Americans will apply for their newly required tourist visas, which are expected to cost about \$200. □

Indian court bans broadcast of film on Delhi gang rape

ELLEN BARRY
© 2015 New York Times

NEW DELHI - Irate over the release of a British-made documentary film on a 2012 gang rape, India's home minister, Rajnath Singh, on Wednesday told parliament that the government would "not allow any organization to leverage such an incident and use it for commercial purpose." The documentary, "India's Daughter," features an interview with Mukesh Singh, now on death row for the crime, who justified the brutal attack by saying "a de-

cent girl won't roam around at 9 o'clock at night." Excerpts from the interview were released Tuesday as part of an advance publicity campaign.

Things moved quickly after that. After a condemnation from Singh, the Delhi police moved for a restraining order, and an Indian court issued a stay banning broadcast of the film, which is set to be aired Sunday on the BBC. The order said that the rapist's statements created "an atmosphere of fear and tension with the possibility of public outcry and

law and order situation." The filmmaker, Leslee Udwin, said she was "deeply saddened" by the ban, which she described as the "flouting of a basic right of freedom of speech."

"India should be embracing this film, not blocking it with a knee-jerk hysteria without even seeing it," she wrote in a statement on the website of NDTV, a news channel. Though the vast majority of Indians have not yet seen the film, it was nonetheless the subject of stormy debate among activists and public intellectuals

Wednesday. Nilanjana S. Roy, an author, warned of the "very real risk of turning a rapist into the Twitter celebrity of the day." Writing in FirstPost, the film director Sandip Roy questioned what all the fuss was about, considering that, as he put it, "Singh's observations would not sound that out of place in the mouths of many law-abiding Indians."

During a session of parliament, many lawmakers endorsed the home minister's view, and some wondered whether it might be pos-

sible to ban the film outside India's borders.

Anu Aga, a member of the upper house, was one of the few members who spoke out in favor of the film.

"In glorifying India, saying we are perfect, we are not confronting the issues that need to be confronted," she said. "Any time there is a rape, blame is put on the woman - that she was indecently dressed, she provoked the men. It is not just men in prisons' views. It is the view of many men in India." □

Cuba looks to US farmers for help with food crisis

M. WEISSENSTEIN
Associated Press

GUIRA DE MELENA, Cuba (AP) — The rust-red fields stretched for miles in the Cuban sun, garlic shoots and beetroot leaves waving gently in the spring breeze. Pink piglets nosed for scraps under the admir-

will wrap up three days of meetings with Cuban officials and farmers as part of a lobbying campaign for the elimination of the embargo. "It's a matter of time," former Agriculture Secretary John Block, who is an Illinois hog farmer and Washington lawyer, said as

to come fastest in agriculture, the sector of the Cuban economy that has the deepest ties to the United States and has been undergoing market-oriented reforms longer than any other on the island.

A bipartisan group of senators who introduced a bill

lion of food to the island last year, primarily frozen chicken and soybean products. American trade officials and farmers are dreaming of dominating a food import market that could grow to \$3 billion in coming years if Cuba's economy improves. "We've been here and we want to stay here," said Stephanie Robinson, marketing and development director for the Virginia Department of Agriculture. Obama's changes appear to allow exports of U.S. farm equipment to hundreds of thousands of Cuban farmers who belong to member-run businesses like the May First Credit and Service Cooperative farm outside Havana. Imports and advice from the U.S. could help Cuba ramp up production levels that have been slumping for years. The island once exported sugar, tobacco and citrus to the United States and imported lots of U.S. rice and other goods. After more than 50 years of central planning and embargo, the island's agricultural production has drastically fallen and the resulting high price of food is the primary source of dissatisfaction for many Cubans. A year after assuming power from his brother Fidel in 2006, President Raul Castro launched a series of reforms to loosen near-total state control of agriculture, giving long-term loans of fallow land to private farmers and allowing them to sell surplus crops on the private market. □



Workers ride on a cart pulled by oxen as they head to work at the "1 de Mayo" agricultural cooperative, during a visit by U.S. agricultural representatives and political figures from farming states, in Artemisa, Cuba, Tuesday, March 3, 2015.

(AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa)

ing gaze of former President Ronald Reagan's first secretary of agriculture and about a dozen other U.S. farmers and trade officials who may represent Cuba's best hope for ending the half-century-old trade embargo it blames for most of its economic troubles. On Wednesday, their delegation of about 90 representatives of U.S. agriculture

he toured the 247-member cooperative farm outside Havana. "It'll be lifted and we'll have normal relations. We should have done it a long time ago." President Barack Obama's loosening of the embargo unleashed a flurry of moves from U.S. companies trying to stake out positions in an untapped market. Significant trade growth appears likely

last month to drop the embargo says farm and business backing is essential. Cuba spends roughly \$2 billion a year to import about 80 percent of its food and a long-standing humanitarian exception to the trade embargo allows U.S. farmers to fill some of that demand. After years of declining sales, mostly Republican states sold nearly \$300 mil-

CARIBBEAN News Briefs

Girl chopped to death in Jamaica at family home

KINGSTON, Jamaica (AP) — A 14-year-old Jamaican girl has been chopped to death in the yard of her family's home as she got ready for school. Authorities say Kayalicia Simpson was killed early Tuesday in the eastern parish of St. Thomas. The teenager had apparently left the house shortly before dawn to use an outdoor bathroom when she was attacked. Some local media say she was beheaded with a cutlass, but police did not comment. Youth Minister Lisa Hanna said there could be "no justification for such unspeakable savagery" against a child. She says grief counseling will be provided to students at the slain girl's school. Hanna is calling on residents to share any information they may have with investigators. There have been no arrests by investigators in Jamaica, where homicides often go unsolved. □

Turks & Caicos: new time zone for late sunsets

PROVIDENCIALES, Turks & Caicos Islands (AP) — The Turks & Caicos Islands is switching to a new time zone, citing potential benefits to its tourism-dependent economy. Employment Minister Ricardo Donhue Gardiner said Wednesday that adopting Atlantic Standard Time will provide a boost to resorts, bars and restaurants as well as "allowing our residents to enjoy a little more sunshine." The tiny territory will move its clocks forward an hour on Sunday to get later sunsets. Atlantic Standard Time is followed year-round by eastern Caribbean islands and eastern sections of Canada's Quebec province. The British Caribbean territory has historically followed Eastern Standard Time along with eastern U.S. states. During winter months, the islands' peak tourism season, the sun goes down around 5 p.m. in Turks & Caicos. □

Mexico raided migrant train 153 times in last year

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexican authorities said Tuesday they staged 153 raids over the last year on a train known as "La Bestia" that rolled toward the U.S. border crowded with hundreds of Central American migrants. Following a big surge in child migrants reaching the U.S. border last year, Mexico's government cracked down on routes commonly used by migrants to travel from Guatemala to the U.S. border. The head of the National

Immigration Institute, Ardelio Vargas, said the 153 train raids were part of 758 immigration inspections over the last year. Raids were also carried out on bars, restaurants and hotels where migrants were either held or forced to work, and immigration agents also targeted buses, trucks and other means of smuggling migrants. Authorities began setting up highway checkpoints and raiding trains in mid-2014 to discourage clandestine migration from

Central American countries like Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. But it was the train — a decrepit freight line where boxcar roofs were once completely covered with migrants — that drew Mexico's greatest attention. While some suspected the first raids on the train in August were merely for show, Vargas said Mexico intends to keep migrants off the boxcars. "The consequences of a railroad accident with 700 or 1,200 migrants on board

would have been very regrettable," Vargas said. "We can't be so irresponsible as to allow migrants to continue risking their lives on a freight line that has all the deficiencies it has." There are some indications that migrants may have switched to taking buses, a somewhat more expensive route through Mexico. On Tuesday, the institute reported that 101 Central Americans were caught aboard two buses in the north-central state of Zacatecas. □



At the Riu Palace Antillas:

Orchid Casino Celebrates its Glamorous Grand Opening!

PALM BEACH - Orchid Casino located at the Riu Palace Antillas (formerly the Westin Resort) celebrated their elaborate grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony for the newly renovated casino recently, hosting more than 375 guests with an extensive Hors'd oeuvre menu, cocktails and over flowing champagne. The guests marveled at the décor of the Casino, Red Piano Lounge and Orchid theme that flowed throughout the entire Casino. The Casino features Slots, Baccarat, Black Jack and



Craps with 3-4-5 times the odds, a large Poker Room and the only Race & Sportsbook with no tax winnings. The Red Piano Lounge which overlooks the casino

is a perfect place sit back, unwind with a cocktail or glass of wine and set the evening in motion while in the company of the nightly musicians.



The Casino also offers its guests to sign up to be a member of the "VIP Players Club." Members will receive \$20.00 free slot play and double points on their Birthdays and Anniversaries! Coming in April the Casino

will also host daily Bingo and slot tournaments. Orchid Casino is open 24-hours, 7-days-a-week, located in the upper lobby of the resort with a convenient entrance and elevator service adjacent to the parking area. ☐



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Tickets and seating is first come first serve.

Keith Larsen, visiting Aruba



and staying in the low-rise area, has gone up to the Marriott once a week for each of the past three weeks to watch a show. "It has become our weekly ritual. My wife and I love to laugh, the comedians are always terrific, and this is without question the top evening activity in Aruba." The comedy show is a great night out. It is the best show in Aruba - the comedians are all truly some of the finest from New York. It is a relaxed, intimate setting at the Marriott.

In addition, there is also an option to purchase a premium four-hour open bar, and each person gets \$10 FREE Slot Play cash with each ticket.

The remaining show schedule will be:

--MARCH 5th to the 7th - KEVIN BRENNAN from Saturday Night Live, the David Letterman show, and his own HBO special.

--MARCH 6th to the 10th -BRIAN SCOTT McFADDEN. Brian has appeared on the David Letterman show, the Craig Ferguson Show, and the hit Ben Stiller film The Secret Life of Walter Mitty. Joining Brian from the 8th to the 10th will be MIKE BURTON, from Fox TV and Comedy Central.

RAY ELLIN will host the shows. Known as "Aruba Ray" because of his passion for Aruba, Ray has been coming to Aruba every month for the past



three years, and produces and hosts these incredible comedy shows on the island. He is considered by his peers to be the best host in NYC.

Ray has appeared on many television programs; he is the host of the new Gong Show Live, a resurrection of the classic 70's television show. He also hosted the popular talk show Late Net, and hosted the television shows The Movie Loft, Brain Fuel, and New York Now. He also produced and directed the very successful film The Latin Legends of Comedy, distributed by 20th Century Fox.



It is suggested to arrive early - seating is first come first serve. Doors open at 8pm. The showroom is intimate - it is suggested you purchase tickets in advance at www.ArubaComedy.com. You can also purchase tickets (subject to availability) at the Amsterdam Ballroom showroom door at 730pm. The tickets are \$34. And each Comedy Ticket gives every audience member \$10 in FREE Slot Play in the Stellaris Casino at the Marriott (ID required!). And each Comedy Ticket will also provide a 20% discount to the Aruba La Vista buffet. Plus, audience members can purchase an optional four hour premium open bar for only \$20! The premium open bar continues after the show in the casino until midnight. An incredible deal, and a full night out. Drinks are available for purchase, but there is NO drink minimum! Anyone can attend, however the show is suggested for a mature audience. These comedians perform regularly in New York City's biggest venues. Ask your concierge for assistance. □

Loyal Visitors Honored at the Divi Tamarijn Resort



PALM BEACH - Recently the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure of honoring two loyal and friendly guests at the Divi Tamarijn Resort as Goodwill Ambassadors to commemorate their 25th consecutive visit to Aruba! The symbolic honorary title is presented in the name of the Minister of Tourism as tokens of appreciation to guests who visit Aruba for 20-to-34 consecutive years.

The honorees were Mr. Peter and Mrs. Linda Clarke from Massachusetts. Peter and Linda are loyal guests of the Divi Tamarijn Resort and they love Aruba very much because of the friendly people, the weather, beaches, restaurants, Casinos and shopping. The certificates were presented by Ms. Marouska Heyliger representing the Aruba Tourism Authority. □

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THURSDAY!

Bonus 4-Card BINGO starting at 1pm!

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Loyal Visitors Honored at the Aruba Beach Club



EAGLE BEACH - Recently, Darline S. de Cuba had the great pleasure to honor two loyal and friendly couples as Emerald Ambassadors and Goodwill Ambassadors at their home away

from home. The honorees were Sol and Jo-Ann Levin from Massachusetts and Donald and Jewell Hill from Alabama. The symbolic honorary titles are presented on behalf

of the Minister of Tourism, Transportation, Primary Sector and Culture Mr. O. Oduber as tokens of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba between 20-34 and 35-or-more consecu-

tive years.

Darline S. de Cuba representing Aruba Tourism Authority together with Amanda Singh and Teresa Britten conducted the ceremony at the Aruba Beach Club. Top reasons for returning provided by the honorees are that they consider Aruba to be the "Happy Island," the great weather and the friendly Aruban hospitality.



Congratulations to all, you hold a special place in the hearts of Arubans! ☐



Take a break: Enjoy a weekend get-a-way! Renaissance Curaçao Resort 'March Weekend Special'



WILLEMSTAD – Treat yourself and your loved ones to a luxurious weekend stay at the Renaissance Curaçao Resort. For a limited time only take advantage of the Renaissance Curaçao Resort 'March Weekend Special' and pay only \$149.00 per night during the weekend. This special price is based on a minimum two nights stay excluding 24.12% tax and

service charge. Interested in this special offer? You should have a valid identification when checking in; *this offer is valid for new reservations and only for Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, St. Martin, St. Eustatius & Saba residents it also depends on room availability. Visit Renaissance Curaçao Resort and take advantage of the 'March Weekend Special' and enjoy

all amenities that Renaissance Resort Curaçao and Renaissance Mall & Rif Fort; from high quality establishments to a wide variety of savory restaurants and culinary delights. Renaissance Resort Curaçao and Renaissance Mall & Rif Fort is the perfect location to shop, relax and enjoy. For reservations call 435-5000 or email at reservations@curacaorenais-

sance.com. Stay up to date with promotions and campaigns

please visit www.renaissancecuracao.com or their Facebook page. □



Catch your own dinner with Driftwood! *Motto at Driftwood Restaurant: "from the pier to your plate!"*



ORANJESTAD - The downtown marina is home of Driftwood Fishing Charters, the successful fisherman of the established seafood restaurant Driftwood in Oranjestad. Driftwood owner Herby

Merryweather has a love and passion for fishing. A fisherman who knows about fish, what our local waters have to offer, and what the words "fresh seafood" really mean. What Herby catches will be served in his restaurant on the same day. Herby loves to share his fishing passion with the many visitors to the island. His fleet of a 35ft. Twin Engine Bertram yacht and a 50ft. Twin Engine Post yacht, appropriately called "Driftwood I and II, is available for charters on 12 noon and from 1pm to 5pm.



Winners of Intl. LUHRS Marina Group Blue Marlin Release Tournament 2009



Catch your own dinner

A charter includes: captain, mate all fishing equipment, bait, sodas and bottled water. On a full day charter sandwiches and snacks are also included.

You can call Herby directly at (297) 592 4040 or go to www.driftwoodaruba.com

Driftwood Restaurant. This authentic Aruban seafood restaurant is located in characteristic downtown Oranjestad. Their

extended menu has been jubled by many. Driftwood offers daily specials, as well as a delicious 4-course menu for just \$25.95 **Charter deep sea fishing rates:** \$400 - 1/2 day • \$760 - full day. Rates per boat Max. 6 people. **Driftwood Restaurant** Authentic Aruban Seafood Restaurant; Klipstraat #12, Downtown Oranjestad. Tel: (297) 583 2515 www.driftwoodaruba.com Open hours: every day, from 5pm till 10:30pm. Sunday Closed.



In this Monday March 2, 2015 photo made available Tuesday March 3, 2015 retired women's soccer star and member of Italian club Roma's board of directors Mia Hamm poses during an interview with The Associated Press in the hospitality area of Rome's Olympic Stadium.

Associated Press

AP Interview:

Mia Hamm 'humbled' to join Roma's board

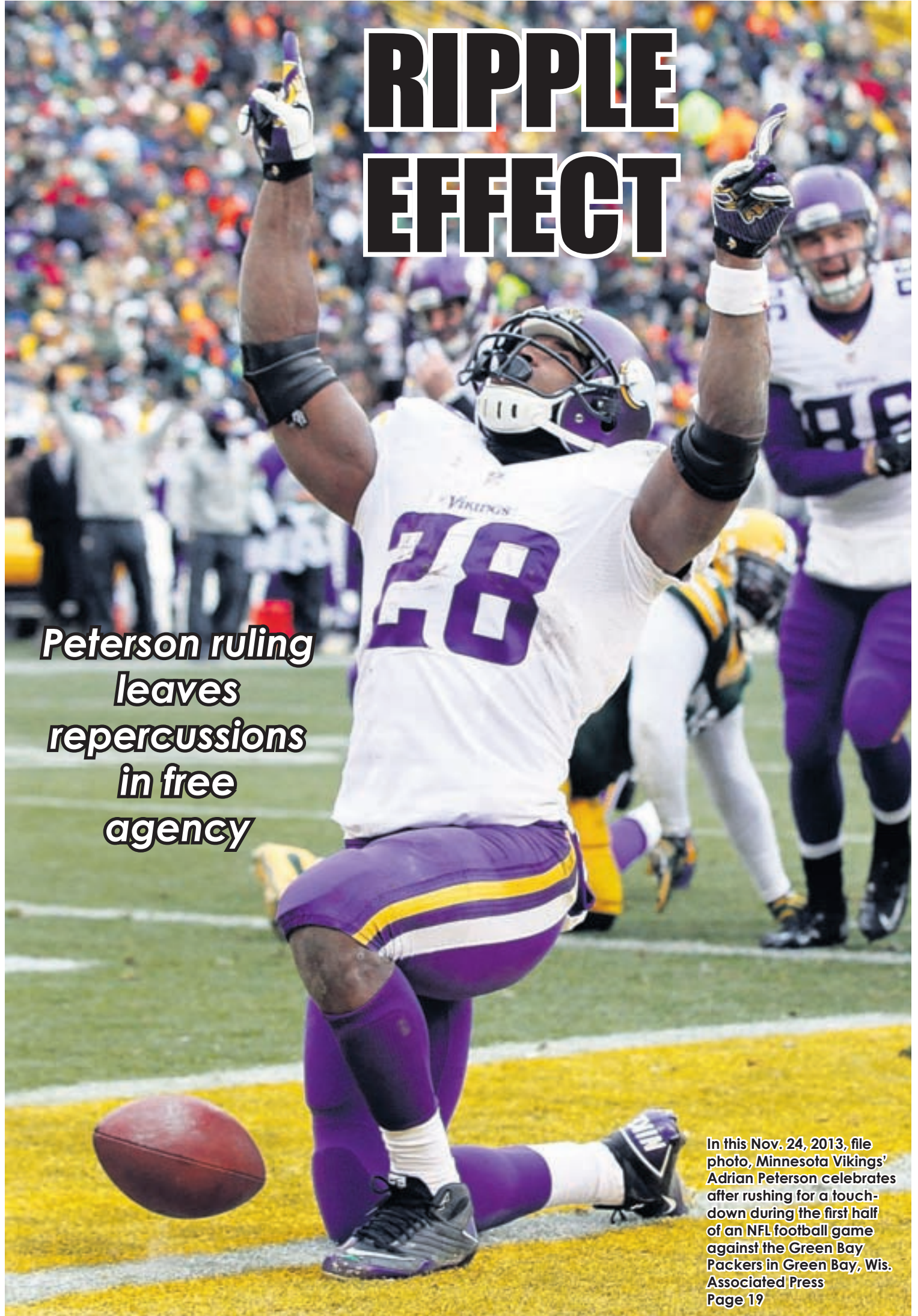
ANDREW DAMP
AP Sports Writer

ROME (AP) — With three kids at home, Mia Hamm already had plenty on her plate when two professional clubs called over the space of just a few days in October.

They weren't asking her to play — the 42-year-old soccer star has been retired for more than a decade — rather they wanted her to join their management teams.

Hamm, who won the women's FIFA world player of the year award in 2001 and 2002 — the first two times that honor was given — quickly said yes to both the MLS expansion squad Los Angeles Football Club and Roma, the three-time Italian champion controlled by Boston executive James Pallotta.

Continued on page 22



RIPPLE EFFECT

Peterson ruling leaves repercussions in free agency

In this Nov. 24, 2013, file photo, Minnesota Vikings' Adrian Peterson celebrates after rushing for a touchdown during the first half of an NFL football game against the Green Bay Packers in Green Bay, Wis. Associated Press Page 19

NHL Capsules

Ducks win, Predators lose to force tie atop NHL standings

The Associated Press

NEWARK, New Jersey (AP)

— Cory Schneider made 33 saves, and the playoff-hopeful New Jersey Devils beat NHL-leading Nashville 3-1 on Tuesday night, sending the Predators to their season-worst fourth straight loss.

Adam Larsson and Eric Gelinas scored first-period goals in front of a sparse crowd that came out on a snowy night. Mike Cammalleri was awarded a goal with 1:14 remaining in the game.

Mike Fisher had the lone goal for Nashville (41-17-7), which entered the night with a league-leading 89 points. This is the Predators' worst skid since last March. Backup goalie Carter Hutton made 21 saves for Nashville, which lost at the New York Rangers on Monday.

New Jersey started the night nine points behind Boston, holder of the second wild-card spot in the Eastern Conference.

MAPLE LEAFS 3, PANTHERS 2

SUNRISE, Fla. (AP) — Peter Holland and the Leafs took advantage after both Panthers goalies were injured to snap a franchise-worst 16-game road losing streak.

Holland netted the winning goal 5:28 into the third period against Al Montoya, who had replaced injured starter Roberto Luongo after the first period. It was the Maple Leafs' first road win in 17 games (0-14-2) since they beat Boston on Dec. 31.

The Panthers changed goalies twice, and even had goalie coach Robb Tallas get dressed on an emergency basis, but the 41-year-old Tallas never entered the game. He hasn't played in an NHL game since 2001.

Montoya was injured early in the third period, but managed to stay in the game despite being hobbled. He eventually was replaced by Luongo, who got back into uniform after changing into street clothes.

LIGHTNING 3, SABRES 0



Minnesota Wild's Erik Haula, right, of Finland, reaches for the puck as Ottawa Senators' Marc Methot controls it in the third period of an NHL hockey game, Tuesday, March 3, 2015, in St. Paul, Minn.
Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Tampa Bay rookie Andrei Vasilevskiy made 28 saves in his first NHL shutout.

Steven Stamkos opened the scoring late in the first period, snapping a wrist shot past former teammate Anders Lindback. Ryan Callahan and Victor Hedman added power-play goals 1:36 apart early in the second.

Lindback (2-9) made 32 saves in his first appearance for Buffalo since being acquired last month from Dallas. He was given the starting assignment one day after Michal Neuvirth was dealt to the New York Islanders for Chad Johnson in a swap of goalies.

FLAMES 3, FLYERS 2, OT PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Jiri Hudler scored 1:23 into overtime. The Flames won for the second time in six games as they try to make a push in the Western Conference playoff race.

It was a successful homecoming for 21-year-old rookie and New Jersey native Johnny Gaudreau, who had hundreds of fans in attendance. Gaudreau assisted on the winning goal, helping the Flames rebound after blowing a 2-0 lead.

Sean Monahan and Mikael Backlund also scored for the Flames.

Sean Couturier and Mark Streit both scored in the third period for Philadelphia.

CAPITALS 5, BLUE JACKETS 3

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) —

Alex Ovechkin added to his NHL-leading total with two goals, leading the charge in Washington's victory over the Blue Jackets, Columbus' seventh loss in a row.

Eric Fehr and Tom Wilson also scored, and Marcus Johansson added an empty-net goal.

Nicklas Backstrom and Jason Chimera each had two assists for the Capitals, who solidified their hold on the first wild-card playoff spot in the East before starting a five-game homestand. Braden Holtby had 27 saves.

Ovechkin, who has won the Richard Trophy as the league's goal-scoring leader the last two years and four times overall, now has 43.

Scott Hartnell had two goals and an assist — and was stopped on a penalty shot — while David Savard also scored for the Blue Jackets, 0-6-1 in their last seven.

Sergei Bobrovsky started in goal for Columbus, making his first appearance in 18 games since sustaining a groin injury on Jan. 21. He had 27 saves.

WILD 3, SENATORS 2, SO ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — Charlie Coyle scored the winner in a shootout, Matt Dumba had two goals in regulation and the Wild stopped Ottawa's five-game winning streak.

Devan Dubnyk made 31 saves and turned away Mike Hoffman in the fifth round of the shootout to secure Minnesota's 15th victory in 20 games.

Ottawa's Andrew Hammond showed why he's called "The Hamburgler" by making 36 saves, but he lost for the first time in six NHL starts. Mika Zibanejad and Bobby Ryan scored for the Senators.

Dumba scored twice in the second period for his first career two-goal game and give Minnesota a 2-0 lead.

STARS 3, ISLANDERS 2, OT DALLAS (AP) — Cody Eakin scored 2:18 into overtime and the Stars snapped a six-game losing streak.

Eakin took a pass from Jamie Benn on a 2-on-1 break and beat goalie Jaroslav Halak. The goal gave the Stars their first overtime victory in eight games this season. □

Dice-K starts comeback bid in Japan with solid outing



Daisuke Matsuzaka of the Softbank Hawks pitches against the Hanshin Tigers at Koshien Stadium in Nishinomiya, western Japan, Wednesday, March 4, 2015.
Associated Press

NISHINOMIYA, Japan (AP) — Daisuke Matsuzaka made the first start of his comeback in Japan on

Wednesday, returning to the scene of one of his most memorable pitching performances.

After eight seasons in Major League Baseball, Matsuzaka is looking to rebuild his career with the Softbank Hawks of Japan's Pacific League.

The 34-year-old right-hander struck out two batters while giving up four hits over three scoreless innings in his first start of the exhibition season. He walked two batters in the 57-pitch outing against the Hanshin Tigers at Koshien Stadium.

"I had a few butterflies at first," Matsuzaka said. "But I was able to settle down and get some powerful pitches across the plate so

I'm pleased about that."

Matsuzaka famously threw 250 pitches in 17 innings at the 1998 high school tournament at Koshien, a marathon outing that came a day after a 148-pitch complete game shutout. He also threw a no-hitter in the final, leading Yokohama High School to the championship.

Matsuzaka was 3-3 with a 3.89 ERA and 78 strikeouts in 34 games last season for the New York Mets.

In his first season in the majors, Matsuzaka helped Boston win the World Series in 2007. His best season was 2008, when he went 18-3 with 154 strikeouts and a 2.90 ERA but he didn't live up to expectations after that. □

Peterson just 1 of the NFL players left in limbo by ruling

JIMMY GOLEN
AP Sports Writer

BOSTON (AP) — There is a defensive end heading for NFL free agency who had 15 sacks in his last full season. He's the kind of player a team can build a pass rush around, if he were spending more time on the gridiron and less in the courts fighting domestic abuse charges.

Greg Hardy's team, the Carolina Panthers, isn't expected to keep him.

And then there's the recent league MVP, a running back who once topped 2,000 yards, whose team says it wants him back, but he's not so sure. If the Minnesota Vikings wouldn't support him after he was charged with beating his son, Adrian Peterson can probably find a team that will.

As NFL teams turn to free agency on March 10, there is more to consider this year than 40-yard dash times and vertical jumps. A few players who might otherwise attract a bidding war now have to convince teams they are talented enough to justify the baggage they bring along.

And that's making what was already an imperfect science even more difficult.

"It all makes it rough on the football people," said Bill Polian, a 2015 Pro Football Hall of Famer who built the Buffalo Bills, Panthers and Indianapolis Colts into Super Bowl teams. "(Hardy) would be a marquee free agent if not for these other issues."

Peterson is still under con-

Roger Goodell announced after his initial two-game punishment for Ray Rice angered almost everyone. But U.S. District Judge David Doty ruled last week that Goodell could not suspend Peterson under a policy that was created after the original crime. (Peterson pleaded no contest to a



In this Dec. 1, 2013, file photo, Minnesota Vikings running back Adrian Peterson, left, tries to break a tackle from Chicago Bears free safety Chris Conte during the fourth quarter of an NFL football game in Minneapolis.

Associated Press

tract with the Vikings. But he has said he is uneasy about returning to the team that distanced itself from him after he was charged with a felony for disciplining his child to the point of injury. He missed 15 games — seven with pay while on the exempt list and the last six while suspended under the enhanced personal conduct policy Commissioner

reduced assault misdemeanor). The case goes back to an NFL-appointed arbitrator, who is likely to tell Goodell to review the case under the old policy that in most cases maxed out at a two-game suspension. In the meantime, the NFL has appealed, and it is likely to ask for a stay of Doty's ruling until then, said Daniel Wallach, a sports litigator in

Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

"That will go a long way toward clarifying Adrian Peterson's status," he said. "If Peterson loses the stay issue, NFL free agency advances without him. And what does that do to his market value? It's going to diminish it tremendously." Peterson isn't the only one. Hardy was placed on the exempt list and missed all but one game after he was convicted last summer on two counts of domestic violence. He appealed and had both charges dismissed last month when his accuser couldn't be located to testify; the prosecutor said there was evidence of a financial settlement.

The NFL said Hardy was never officially disciplined and his case was still "under review." He will become an unrestricted free agent next week, but potential suitors will have to consider a potential suspension — in addition to the public relations damage that would come from signing a man who, according to court testimony, threw his girlfriend on a futon covered with rifles, ripped a necklace off her neck, and threatened to kill her.

"We start with the premise that you have no idea what

his availability will be," Polian said. "You would want protection for all those scenarios ... all of that makes the negotiation very difficult."

Even in the draft this year, Florida State University quarterback Jameis Winston is a potential No. 1 overall pick, but has off-field issues — including rape accusations — that could make University of Oregon's Marcus Mariota more appealing.

Or, it could make Winston undraftable.

"The owner will say, 'Our sponsors and season-ticket holders and our market won't like it,'" Polian said. "And so there will be owners who are not interested, no matter what the football people think."

And then there is Baltimore Ravens running back Ray Rice — Patient Zero in Goodell's domestic abuse crackdown — whose production diminished even before he was caught punching his wife in a casino hotel elevator. He will be joined on the free agent market by San Francisco defensive lineman Ray McDonald, who was cut by the 49ers in December for what the team called "a pattern of poor decision making." □

A-Rod singles in first at-bat following drug suspension

By RONALD BLUM
AP Sports Writer

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Alex Rodriguez returned to the New York Yankees after an absence of more than 17 months, lining a single into short left field in his first at-bat and going 1 for 2 with a walk in a 3-1 spring-training loss to the Philadelphia Phillies on Wednesday. Greeted by a 10-second mix of boos and cheers from the crowd of 9,673 as he stepped into the batter's box for his first game following a one-year drug suspension, Rodriguez was wearing the Yankees' white uniform with pin-stripes for the team's exhibition season home open-

er rather than the usual dark blue jersey used in exhibition games.

"Once you hit rock bottom, any time you hear a few cheers these days is a pleasant surprise," he said. Rodriguez swung at the first four of 10 pitches he saw in three plate appearances. Batting second as New York's designated hitter, he swung past a pair of 91 mph pitches from Philadelphia's Kevin Slowey in the first inning.

"I felt like I was swinging under water," he said. "I was like, man, it's been a long time."

He lined a soft single to left on an 89 mph 0-2 offering that was over the plate.

That drew cheers from fans at Steinbrenner Field on a sunny afternoon with a temperature in the low 80s. "It's probably the first spring training game in a long time that he's been a little anxious," Yankees manager Joe Girardi said. Rodriguez has had success against Slowey, going 4 for 9 during the regular season with two doubles and a home run.

When Rodriguez came up again in the third, he grounded a 96 mph fastball from reliever Paul Clemens to shortstop for an inning-ending forceout. He walked on a full count in the sixth against Ethan Martin, loading the bases



New York Yankees' designated hitter Alex Rodriguez hits a single in the first inning during a spring training baseball exhibition game against the Philadelphia Phillies, Wednesday, March 4, 2015, in Tampa, Fla.

Associated Press

with no outs and the Yankees trailing 2-0.

He has a little more than a month to show he should be in the lineup when the Yankees open their season at home against Toronto on April 6.

"It's going to take two or three weeks for me to kind

of get a gauge where I am," Rodriguez said.

There appeared to be few fans wearing shirts with Rodriguez's No. 13; there was a scattering of spectators with the No. 2 of Derek Jeter, the Yankees captain who retired at the end of last season. □

NBA Capsules

James scores 27 on milestone night, Cavs cruise past Celtics

The Associated Press

CLEVELAND (AP) — LeBron James scored 27 points to move into 21st place on the NBA's career list, and the Cleveland Cavaliers cruised to a 110-79 victory over the Boston Celtics on Tuesday night.

James, who has 24,508 career points, moved past Ray Allen with a layup in the third quarter. He was pulled with 4:41 remaining in the period and didn't return, playing 26 minutes.

Kyrie Irving scored 18 points in his return after missing two games with a shoulder injury, and Kevin Love — who played despite missing the morning shoot-around due to illness — added 12 points.

Brandon Bass scored 15 points to lead Boston, which lost by its largest margin of the season.

HAWKS 104, ROCKETS 96

ATLANTA (AP) — Jeff Teague scored 25 points, Al Horford added 18 and NBA-leading Atlanta rallied from 18 points down to win its fifth straight.

James Harden, the league's leading scorer, was serving a one-game suspension and did not play for Houston, but the Rockets led for the most of the game until Teague's 3-pointer with 4:24 remaining put Atlanta up 91-90.

Houston forced a couple of ties in the closing minutes,



Cleveland Cavaliers' LeBron James goes up for a shot against Boston Celtics' Evan Turner (11) in the third quarter of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, March 3, 2015, in Cleveland.

Associated Press

but never regained the lead. Jason Terry finished with 21 points in a reserve role and starting forward Terrence Jones had 18 points for Houston, which

was attempting to match its season high with a sixth straight victory.

NUGGETS 106, BUCKS 95

DENVER (AP) — Danilo Gallinari scored a season-high

26 points, Kenneth Faried had 14 points and 14 rebounds and Denver won hours after Brian Shaw was fired as coach.

Ty Lawson had 16 points and 10 assists for Denver, which ended a six-game losing streak and won at home for the first time since Jan. 14.

Shaw was fired after 1 1/2 seasons with the team at 20-39. Assistant coach Melvin Hunt was named interim head coach.

Khris Middleton led Milwaukee with 20 points. Giannis Antetokounmpo had 19 points and 11 rebounds for the Bucks, who have lost five of six.

Denver led by six after three quarters and started the fourth on an 11-2 run to go up 87-72.

HORNETS 104, LAKERS 103

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — Al Jefferson had 21 points and 16 rebounds, Mo Williams added 20 points and 13 assists and Charlotte won for the third time in four games. Williams, who came in averaging 23.4 points in his first five games since being acquired from Minnesota, had his third double-double with the Hornets. He knocked down a big 3-pointer with a minute to play to push the lead to six and added five free throws in the final 18 seconds to seal the win.

Gerald Henderson added

21 points, including several key baskets late in the fourth quarter. Cody Zeller had 10 points and 11 rebounds as all five Charlotte starters finished in double figures.

Jeremy Lin led the Lakers with 23 points off the bench, while Jordan Clarkson had 19.

KINGS 124, KNICKS 86

NEW YORK (AP) — Rudy Gay scored 25 points, DeMarcus Cousins had 22 and Ben McLemore finished with 20 as Sacramento handed New York its worst loss of the season.

The Kings scored the first four points and never trailed. They built the lead to 16 after the first quarter and to as many as 30 in the second.

Alexey Shved led the Knicks with 15 points. Jason Smith and Shane Larkin had 13 each.

After shooting only 35 percent (7-for-20) from the field in the first quarter, the Knicks were even worse in the second, going 6 for 24 (25 percent).

Their previous worst loss was by 28 points to Charlotte, 110-82, on Jan. 10.

JAZZ 93, GRIZZLIES 82

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Gordon Hayward and Derrick Favors scored 21 points each, Rudy Gobert added 15 points and a career-best 24 rebounds to lead Utah to its third straight win. □

Ray Allen says he will not play this NBA season



In this June 4, 2014, file photo, Miami Heat guard Ray Allen warms up during basketball practice in San Antonio.

Associated Press

By TIM REYNOLDS
AP Basketball Writer

MIAMI (AP) -- Ray Allen might return to the NBA - just not this season.

The league's all-time leading 3-point shooter who played for two NBA championship clubs announced Wednesday that he decided not to sign with any franchise for the remainder of this season, although he left the door open for a possible return in 2015-16.

"Over the past several months, I have taken a lot of time to deliberate what is best for me," Allen said in a statement released through the office of his agent, Jim

Tanner. "I've ultimately decided that I will not play this NBA season."

Allen's future has been the source of incessant speculation since last summer, so much so that at one point Tanner felt compelled to post a message on social media and deny widespread reports that the future Hall of Fame sharpshooter had signed with Cleveland.

"Ray has received enormous interest from a number of NBA teams throughout this season," Tanner said in the same statement. "We will communicate with interested teams as Ray makes a decision for the 2015-16 season."

Allen turns 40 on July 20, though he's long prided himself on keeping an extremely high level of fitness. Many of his social-media posts in recent months have been directly related to either his workouts, his passion for running or to encourage others to become more fit.

Allen is a 10-time All-Star who was part of Boston's title in 2008 and Miami's in 2013 - the season when he hit one of the biggest shots in NBA postseason history, a over-time-forcing 3-pointer from the right corner with 5.2 seconds left in Game 6 of that season's Finals against San Antonio. □

Pacquiao big hit so far in Vegas sports books vs Mayweather



In this combination of file photos, Floyd Mayweather Jr., left, prepares to spar at a gym in east London on May 22, 2009, and Manny Pacquiao, right, of the Philippines, weighs in for the junior welterweight boxing match against British boxer Ricky Hatton, May 1, 2009, in Las Vegas.

Associated Press

TIM DAHLBERG
AP Sports Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Manny Pacquiao has always believed he can do what 47 other fighters before him have failed to do — beat Floyd Mayweather Jr. in the ring.

Turns out a lot of other people are believers, too. And they're backing their opinions with real money.

A flurry of early action on Pacquiao has already narrowed the odds for the big fight in this city's legal sports books. By the time they get into the ring May 2, it's conceivable that Mayweather might not be favored at all. "I've never seen Mayweather this low eight weeks out before the fight," said Jimmy Vaccaro, who has booked money on every big fight for the past four decades in Las Vegas. "This is as close as we get to a legitimate pick 'em fight since Mayweather fought (Oscar) De La Hoya."

Mayweather opened as a 2 1/2-1 favorite in most sports books when the fight was announced, and at that price Pacquiao backers couldn't wait to get their bets down. At Vaccaro's South Point hotel sports book, there were 150 tickets written on Pacquiao in the days after the fight was announced to just 10 on the favored Mayweather. Over the weekend, Vaccaro said his book took a couple of \$10,000 bets on Pacquiao, which prompted him to move the betting line closer to try and

draw more action on Mayweather.

"It's a one-way attack on Pacquiao," Vaccaro said. "We're well into a six-figure loss right now if Pacquiao wins."

That could change when the so-called "smarts" start weighing in on a fight that is still two months away. Both Pacquiao and Mayweather began training camps this week, giving bettors plenty of time to form their opinions as more news circulates about their training status.

Vaccaro actually saw an influx of Pacquiao money first in October when he put up a line on the fight before it was made, making Mayweather a minus-300 favorite and Pacquiao a plus-250 underdog.

That meant a bettor had to wager \$300 to win \$100 on Mayweather, while Pacquiao paid \$250 for every \$100 bet. Vaccaro had barely posted the line when he got a \$3,000 bet on Pacquiao, and the trend has continued unabated.

"The smarts really aren't jumping in yet, they're going to wait to see how low it goes," Vaccaro said. "They're telling you that they think it will get much lower."

The latest odds at the South Point still favored Mayweather, but now at minus-200. Pacquiao has gone to plus-170, meaning Mayweather is now less than a 2-1 favorite in man-to-man betting. At the Westgate Las Vegas Su-

perbook, Mayweather was minus-210, while Pacquiao was plus-180.

So far, at least, the betting pattern looks much like it did in 2007, when Mayweather began as a 2-1 pick over De La Hoya in the fight that catapulted him to pay-per-view stardom. While boxing insiders liked Mayweather in the fight, the betting public was infatuated with De La Hoya, and he would eventually go into the ring as a slight favorite.

No matter who ends up favored, the legal bookies figure to be winners. Already, Vaccaro said he has seen more betting on the fight than he ever has two months out, and some in the betting industry are predicting legal wagering of up to \$50 million on the bout. The betting handle will be helped by a number of different proposition bets, and the fact tens of thousands of college basketball fans can bet while in town for the kickoff of the NCAA basketball tournament.

The fight will cap a huge day in sports that includes the Kentucky Derby and playoffs in the NBA and NHL, along with a full slate of baseball.

"Other than Super Bowl Sunday, the single day will be as big as we've written in years," Vaccaro said. "Look for May 2 to be approaching the Super Bowl handle on Super Bowl Sunday, and that's saying a lot." □



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SAT 3:35 | 5:35 | 7:35 | 9:35 | 11:35
SUN & HOL 3:35 | 5:35 | 7:35 | 9:35



SHARLTO COPLEY | DEV PATEL

CHAPPIE

MON-THURS 5:35 | 8:10
FRI 5:35 | 8:10 | 10:45
SAT 3:00 | 5:35 | 8:10 | 10:45
SUN & HOL 3:00 | 5:35 | 8:10
MON-THURS 4:10 | 6:45 | 9:20
FRI 4:10 | 6:45 | 9:20 | 11:55
SAT 1:50 | 4:10 | 6:45 | 9:20 | 11:55
SUN & HOL 1:50 | 4:10 | 6:45 | 9:20



KEVIN COSTNER | MARIA BELLO

McFARLAND USA

MON-THURS 3:50 | 6:30 | 9:10
FRI 3:50 | 6:30 | 9:10
SAT 3:50 | 6:30 | 9:10
SUN & HOL 3:50 | 6:30 | 9:10



WILL SMITH | MARGOT ROBBIE

focus

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES
MON-THURS 4:50 | 7:10 | 9:30
FRI 4:50 | 7:10 | 9:30 | 11:50
SAT 2:30 | 4:50 | 7:10 | 9:30 | 11:50
SUN & HOL 2:30 | 4:50 | 7:10 | 9:30

COLIN FIRTH | TARON EGERTON

Kingsman
THE SECRET SERVICE

MON-THURS 4:00 | 6:25 | 9:10
FRI 4:00 | 6:25 | 9:10
SAT 4:00 | 6:25 | 9:10
SUN & HOL 4:00 | 6:25 | 9:10

GINNIFER GOODWIN | MAE WHITMAN

TinkerBell
AND THE
LEGEND OF THE
NEVERBEAST

SAT 2:00
SUN & HOL 2:00

ANTONIO BANDERAS | TOM KENNY

THE SPONGEBOB
SPONGE OUT OF WATER

3D VERSION
MON-THURS 4:20 | 8:35
FRI 4:20 | 8:35 | 10:45
SAT 4:20 | 8:35 | 10:45
SUN & HOL 4:20 | 8:35
2D VERSION
MON-FRI 6:30
SAT 2:10 | 6:30
SUN & HOL 2:10 | 6:30

DAKOTA JOHNSON | JAMIE DORNAN

FIFTY SHADES
OF GREY

MON-THURS 4:05 | 6:45 | 9:25
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MLS minimum: Playing for \$36,000 with millionaire teammates

TIM BOOTH

AP Sports Writer

TUKWILA, Wash. (AP) —

Before he was in Major League Soccer, Zach Scott worked in accounting, as a coach and as a substitute teacher to pay the bills while he played in pro soccer's lower division.

Scott now plays before crowds of more than 60,000 fans in Seattle with Sounders teammate Clint Dempsey, who made \$6.7 million last year. Scott has started 67 games in six MLS seasons, yet he has never made more than \$52,500 a year.

The gap between players like Scott and their superstar teammates is among the biggest in sports. The low minimum salary is one of the reasons MLS players may strike this season, which starts Friday.

"As a player if you love to do it, you find other ways to make ends meet, or your spouse works a lot. You're definitely not supporting your family as a professional soccer player in the U.S. making minimum salary," Scott said. "Yes, it's frustrating but ... you love to do it and you hope you are around long enough that something like this



In this May 7, 2014, file photo, Seattle Sounders players, including defender Zach Scott, upper left, and forward Clint Dempsey, second from upper left, pose for the traditional team portrait before an MLS soccer match against FC Dallas in Seattle.

next (collective bargaining agreement) comes along and that minimum gets raised."

Of the 572 players in the league last September according to the players union salary report, 297 — or 52 percent — made less than \$100,000. Of those 297 players, nearly half made less than \$50,000.

Now the MLS players may go on strike if a new deal with the league isn't

reached. They are fighting for free agency, but a raise in the minimum salary is also on the table as they negotiate a labor contract to replace the agreement that expired Jan. 31.

"That's what we've been talking about all last year and obviously the beginning of this year. We've had a lot of meetings and stuff and just had everyone on the same page," Real Salt Lake midfielder Luis Gil

said. "We're trying to find a way to benefit for everybody. Obviously some guys make more than others. But we've got to stay strong with this."

Players from the national team like Dempsey and aging stars who move from Europe to the MLS get millions. But to fill out its rosters, MLS clubs have paid paltry salaries to the others. The minimum salary for players at the bottom of rosters is

\$36,500.

With the league now approaching its 20th season, MLS players want an agreement that closes some of that salary inequity.

"You've seen in our last CBA that's gotten smaller and our minimum keeps going up. That's going to keep improving," Real Salt Lake and U.S. national team midfielder Kyle Beckerman said. "Of course, that's always the goal, to get not so much of a gap, but we understand things take time."

MLS has made a splash in recent seasons with the number of notable names signed to the league as designated players with salaries that would be competitive even in top European leagues. Michael Bradley left Italy and was listed at \$6.5 million last year with Toronto, and Kaka's signing with expansion club Orlando City landed him nearly \$7.2 million guaranteed last year.

As of last fall, 15 players in MLS earned more than \$1 million. And some of those players have been the loudest voices in trying to raise the minimums and get better pay for more of the league. □

Associated Press

MIAHAMM

Continued from page 17

"It all kind of happened in one week," Hamm told The Associated Press during an interview before Roma's 1-1 draw with Juventus on Monday. "It was kind of crazy."

Hamm and her husband, ex-baseball star Nomar Garciaparra, joined an ownership group for LAFC, while Hamm alone was asked by Pallotta to join Roma's board of directors in a purely advisory role.

While Garciaparra had been working on the LAFC project, the Roma call was completely unexpected.

"I thought he was inviting me to a game," Hamm said, recounting Pallotta's surprise call. "But I'm very humbled and excited about the opportunity to help in any way I can."



In this file photo taken on Aug. 26, 2007, Mia Hamm, playing for the Washington Freedom, takes a pass while playing against the SoccerPlus Connecticut Reds during the Hall of Fame Game at the National Soccer Hall of Fame in Oneonta, N.Y.

Associated Press

On Monday, Hamm attended her first Roma board meeting.

"She understands football,

which maybe I don't," Pallotta said. "She's done a lot with our academy, some of our philanthropy stuff, some of our training stuff. She's been great."

Boston Bruins president Cam Neely and American investor Stanley Gold are also on Roma's 13-person board, where members serve three-year terms.

"Jim has done a great job with assembling a really diverse group, members with a lot of experience in their own right," Hamm said. "Just to see everyone's energy in the room was a lot of fun." A hedge-fund manager, Pallotta is also a minority owner of the Boston Celtics.

"Jim has used his success and his relationships and experiences to think, 'What is going to make a successful team?'" Hamm said. "Whether it's marketing, whether it's technology,

whether it's real estate, it's bringing all those people's minds together and trying to make this the best club in the world." For Hamm, the opportunity also gives her a chance to reminisce about her childhood in Italy.

When she was a toddler she spent about two years in Florence while her father, who was in the Air Force, studied foreign affairs. Then after she graduated high school, her family moved back to Italy — Rome this time — where her father worked as an Air Force attache for six years.

While Hamm went on to star at the University of North Carolina and led the United States to two World Cup titles, she spent holidays and some summers in Rome.

"Roma was the colors that I would see when I walked around the city. It was the team that I watched on

television, so I knew of the team," said Hamm, wearing a scarf featuring the red of Roma's jerseys. "It's been kind of special for me personally. When I think about Roma I think about my parents, and sharing those experiences with them." While applying herself to Roma, Hamm is also keeping tabs on the preparations for this year's women's World Cup. In January, U.S. forward Abby Wambach and a group of fellow players withdrew their complaint of gender discrimination over the artificial turf fields to be used at the tournament in Canada from June 6 to July 5.

But did FIFA do enough on the issue?

"I think they can always do more," Hamm said. "I would love to see it on grass. But I understand why in Canada they have turf in those venues. □

Next Google Maps adventure: Soaring through Amazon jungle



This undated image released by Google on Monday, March 2, 2015 shows the company's Trekker device on a roughly 65-yard zipline above the Amazon jungle in Brazil.

Associated Press

MICHAEL LIEDTKE

AP Technology Writer
SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — For its next technological trick, Google will show you what it's like to zip through trees in the Amazon jungle. The images released Monday are the latest addition to the diverse collection of photos supplementing Google's widely used digital maps. The maps' "Street View" option mostly provides panoramic views of cities and neighborhoods photographed by car-mounted cameras, but Google also has found creative ways to depict exotic locations where there are no roads.

In its latest foray into the wilderness, Google teamed up with environmental protection group Amazonas Sustainable Foundation, or FAS, to explore a remote part of an Amazon rainforest in Brazil. Google Inc. lent FAS its Trekker device, a camera mounted on an apparatus originally designed to be carried like a backpack by hikers walking on trails. FAS, though, sent the Trekker down a zip line. Google is renowned for going out on a technological limb, but even this project made the company nervous at first, said Karin Tuxen-Bettman, who over-

sees Google's Street View partnerships. The setup required FAS workers to tread through the rainforest to find a place where they could string the zip line so the Trekker wouldn't bump into tree trunks and branches as it zoomed through the thick canopy. With the help of some monkeys who joined their scouting expedition, FAS workers found just enough room to erect a zip line for the Trekker's roughly 65-yard trip. "One of the things that I love about working at Google is that if a partner comes to us with a crazy idea, we will probably try it," Tuxen-Bettman said.

Since Google developed the Trekker camera in 2012, the device has been dispatched on other unusual journeys. The Trekker went scuba diving in the Galá-

pagos Islands to take underwater photographs of the preserve, and traveled on a dog sled in the Canadian Arctic to photograph the tundra. □

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211631

Ikea launches furniture with inbuilt wireless chargers

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Lost that charger again for your cellphone or tablet? Hate sorting heaps of wires to charge various devices? Swedish retailer IKEA might just have the answer — furniture with built-in charging spots, including in bedside tables, lamps and desks. The new collection will be available in Europe and North America from next month, followed by global distribution.

Jeanette Skjelmose, manager of the lighting and wireless charging sector, said Monday Ikea aims to make life at home simpler because "we know that people hate cable mess." The new furniture uses the Qi wireless charging standard, found in some Windows and Android phones, including the new Samsung Galaxy S6 expected to be launched soon. Ikea said it will also provide

special charging covers for iPhones and older Samsung Galaxies. □

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Exxon CEO: Get used to lower oil prices

JONATHAN FAHEY

AP Energy Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Exxon Mobil CEO Rex Tillerson expects the price of oil to remain low over the next two years because of ample global supplies and relatively weak economic growth. "People kinda need to settle in for a while," Tillerson said at the company's annual investor conference in New York.

In a presentation to investors outlining its business plans through 2017, Exxon assumes a price of \$55 a barrel for global crude. That's \$5 below where Brent crude, the most important global benchmark, traded on Wednesday. It's about half of what Brent averaged between 2011 and the middle of last year. The price of oil plunged in the second half of 2014

when it became apparent that production was outpacing global demand. U.S. production was particularly robust, with the increase of 1.5 million barrels per day being the third largest on record, according to a report from BP. Meanwhile, weakening economic conditions in China, Japan and Europe slowed the growth in oil demand. BP CEO Bob Dudley made

remarks similar to Tillerson's in a recent call with investors. The CEO's comments reflect an increasingly common industry view that new sources of oil around the globe, relatively slow growth in demand, and large amounts of crude in storage will keep a lid on prices for the foreseeable future. "When you have that much storage out there, it takes a long time to work

ADP Survey: US businesses add 212K jobs over February

C. S. RUGABER

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. businesses added more than 200,000 jobs in February for the 13th straight month, a private survey found. It was the latest sign that strong hiring should boost the economy this year.

Payroll processor ADP said Wednesday that companies added 212,000 jobs last month, a solid gain, though down from 250,000 in the previous month. January's figure was revised up from 213,000.

The figures come just before Friday's government report on the labor market, which economists forecast will show an increase of 240,000 jobs, according to a survey by data provider FactSet. The unemployment rate is expected to fall to 5.6 percent from 5.7 percent.

The ADP numbers cover only private businesses and sometimes diverge from the government's more comprehensive report, which includes government agencies.

A burst of hiring in the past year has lifted the number of Americans earning paychecks, and a sharp drop in gas prices means those paychecks can buy more goods and services. That has accelerated U.S. economic growth and encouraged companies to add jobs at a steady pace.

Still, February's hiring was the slowest in nine months, according to the ADP data. Most economists have expected a slight slowdown, however, after a run of huge job gains. Employers added 423,000 jobs in November, and more than 1 million from November through January, the fastest three-month pace since 1997. More than 3 million people have been hired in the past 12 months.

"Job growth is strong, but slowing from the torrid pace of recent months," said Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics.

Stocks fall, pulling market further below record highs

MATHEW CRAFT

AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. stocks sank Wednesday, pulling indexes further below record highs hit earlier in the week. The drop was modest but broad: nine of the 10 sectors in the Standard & Poor's 500 index lost ground.

Given the market's recent run, it's only natural for investors to turn cautious, said Terry Sandven, senior equity strategist at U.S. Bank Wealth Management. On Monday, the S&P 500 reached an all-time high while the Nasdaq crossed the 5,000 mark for the first time in nearly 15 years.

"We're in wait-and-see mode," Sandven said. "Prices are definitely stretched, especially when earnings expectations are being set lower."

The S&P 500 gave up 9.25 points, or 0.4 percent, to 2,098.53.

The Dow Jones industrial average lost 106.47 points, or 0.6 percent, to 18,096.90. The Nasdaq composite fell 12.76 points, or 0.3 percent, to 4,967.14.

Alcoa's stock sank 4 percent following news that analysts at Bank of America cut their ratings on the aluminum giant. BofA's analysts expect prices for aluminum to lose strength as China increases its exports. Alcoa lost 59 cents to \$14.59.

Abercrombie & Fitch posted quarterly profits that beat analysts' estimates but its sales fell short. A top executive at the retailer warned that it will likely face trouble from a stron-

ger dollar. Abercrombie's stock plunged \$3.72, or 16 percent, to \$20.27.

With all but 12 big companies in the S&P 500 having turned in their fourth-quarter results, overall earnings are on track to increase 7.7 percent, according to S&P Capital IQ. That's much

of strong hiring. The survey came two days before the government's release of its monthly employment report on Friday. Economists forecast that the economy added 240,000 jobs last month and the unemployment rate slipped to 5.6 percent from 5.7 percent.

Britain's FTSE 100 picked up 0.4 percent.

Two reports showed hints of life in Europe's economy. Retail sales increased by 1.1 percent in January, the first time since records began in 2000 that they've grown for four consecutive months. Meanwhile, a key gauge



Trader Thomas Kay works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange Wednesday, March 4, 2015. U.S. stocks sank Wednesday, pulling indexes further below record highs hit earlier in the week. (AP Photo/Richard Drew)

better than some had feared.

Forecasts for the first three months, however, have been slashed. In early December, analysts projected an 8.6 percent increase in corporate earnings for the first quarter. Today, they expect them to shrink 2.6 percent.

ADP, a payroll processing company, reported Wednesday that its survey showed U.S. businesses added more than 200,000 people to their payrolls in February, the latest sign

U.S. economic growth appears steady despite reports out earlier this week showing declines in construction spending and car sales, according to Jim O'Sullivan, chief U.S. economist at High-Frequency Economics. "We expect another fairly strong rise in payrolls and a drop in the unemployment rate in the February employment report on Friday," O'Sullivan said in a report to clients. In Europe, both France's CAC-40 index and Germany's DAX gained 1 percent.

of business activity showed growth in February across all four of the region's biggest economies: Germany, France, Italy and Spain.

In the market for U.S. government bonds, the yield on the 10-year Treasury note held steady at 2.12 percent.

Most precious and industrial metals traded lower. Gold fell \$3.50 to settle at \$1,200.90 an ounce, and silver slipped 14 cents to \$16.16 an ounce. Copper settled at \$2.66 a pound, nearly unchanged.

Toyota promotes US execs, emboldens American CEO

DETROIT (AP) — Toyota has announced sweeping management changes that consolidate power with North American CEO Jim Lentz and promote some U.S. executives to senior posts in Japan.

Lentz, who previously led sales and marketing, will head Toyota's North American manufacturing operations when the changes take place April 1. North American engineering and research operations also

will report to him.

Toyota also promoted North American communications chief Julie Hamp to chief communications officer for the entire company. She's Toyota's first female managing officer. And it named Chris Reynolds a managing officer and chief legal officer for the whole company. He's the first African-American to hold the positions. Reynolds was general counsel for U.S. operations.

The moves give a greater voice to company executives from North America, Toyota's largest market. In the first nine months of its fiscal year that ended Dec. 31, the company sold just over 2.1 million vehicles, up 7 percent from last year. Japan was the second-biggest region at just over 1.5 million.

They also give Lentz control over manufacturing, engineering and styling as the company moves to shed its

image of boring but reliable cars. Toyota is shifting design and engineering work for cars made in the U.S. to its technical center south of Ann Arbor, Michigan. Lentz, who has been with Toyota since 1982, is a senior managing officer and has a seat on Toyota's board of directors. He has pushed to move the company's North American headquarters from Torrance, California, to Plano, Texas, in an effort to enable faster de-

cision making. The move is in progress but won't be completed for another two years. Company President Akio Toyoda said in a statement that the changes and a diverse team of executives will help Toyota serve customers better around the world, and give Lentz a strong support base "as he continues to build upon the strong momentum he has achieved with dealers and customers in this key market." □

American services firms grow at faster pace in February

JOSH BOAK

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. services firms' activity rose at a slightly faster rate in February, powered by hotels, restaurants and wholesalers.

The Institute for Supply Management said Wednesday that its services index rose to 56.9 in February, up from January's reading of 56.7. Any reading over 50 indicates expansion.

The survey suggests further growth in employment and imports, as a strong hiring streak over the past year has bolstered consumer spending.

"The bottom line is that the US economy remains in good health," said Paul Dales, senior U.S. economist at Capital Economics.

The ISM is a trade group of purchasing managers. Its survey of services firms covers businesses that employ 90 percent of the American workforce, including retail, construction, health care and financial services companies. Fourteen sectors reported growth in Feb-

ruary, while four said activity lessened. In addition to hotels, restaurants and wholesalers, the sectors re-

entertainment. The decline in oil prices has hurt business for firms involved in drilling and construction. "Busi-

ness survey. Yet retailers countered that cheaper gasoline has boosted sales, helping to expand an economy

because of the backlog caused by the West Coast port labor dispute, a contract disagreement that was largely resolved last week.

"It will transpose into better margins by saving money and not having to deal with the issues of re-routing and airline freight," said Tony Nieves, chair of the ISM's non-manufacturing survey committee.

The economy grew at an annual rate of 2.2 percent in the October-December quarter after climbing at a strong 5 percent rate in the summer. Even though overall growth slowed at the close of 2014, hiring has enjoyed a hot streak. Employers added roughly 1 million jobs between November and January, hiring at levels that economists say should support growth at an annual rate between 2.5 percent and 3 percent. Economists surveyed by the data firm FactSet expect the employment report being released Friday to show job gains of 240,000 in February. □



Collett Elkhouria makes a chicken salad sandwich the Superior Restaurant in Cleveland. The Institute for Supply Management released its service sector index for February on Wednesday, March 4, 2015.

(AP Photo/Tony Dejak)

porting growth include real estate, utilities, agriculture and financial sectors. Activity dropped for mining, construction and arts and

ness conditions are seeing less money being spent on capital projects by the major oil companies," one construction firm said in the

where nearly 70 percent of all activity comes from consumer spending. The ISM survey indicated that many companies faced pressures

Target plans to cut jobs to help save \$2 billion

HIROKO TABUCHI

© 2015 New York Times

Target said this week that it would cut several thousand jobs over two years, mostly at its headquarters in Minneapolis, as it struggles to overcome a string of difficult years. The company also announced a revamping of its food business, describing grocery aisles more akin to a Whole Foods than

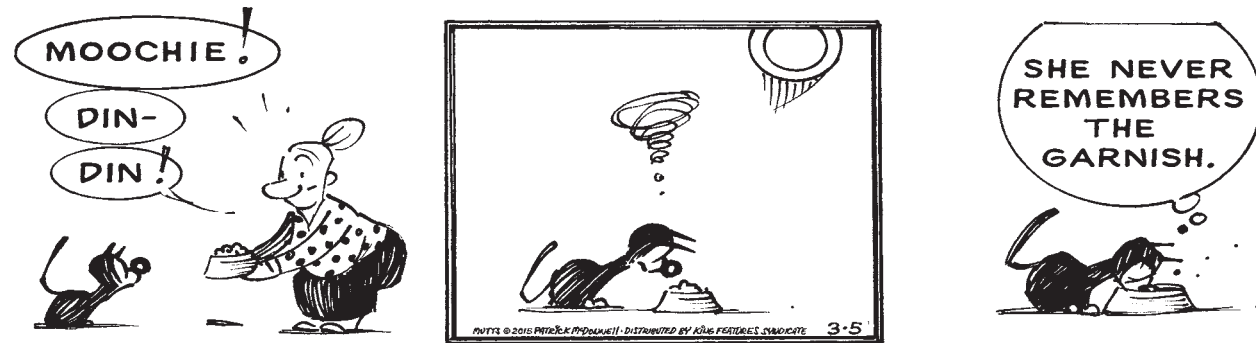
a suburban discount chain. "We'll be much more nimble, much more agile," Brian Cornell, the chief executive, told a meeting of analysts in New York. He added, "We're in the very early stages of a shift in our business." The coming job cuts follow a period marred by an extensive breach of customer information in 2013, sluggish customer

traffic, competition from online retailers and a disappointing expansion into Canada. But Cornell, who joined the retailer in August, is taking some of the bold steps analysts say are necessary to get Target back on track. In January, he announced that the company would close its 133 stores in Canada and place its entire Canadian operation

under bankruptcy protection. About 17,600 people lost their jobs in that failed expansion, which has resulted in more than \$2 billion in net losses since 2011. The fresh job cuts at home are part of an effort to save \$2 billion over the next two years, from a combination of corporate restructuring at its headquarters, leaner supply chains and more

efficient product sourcing, Target said in a statement. The company will set up centralized teams at its headquarters that will tackle specific areas of the business, like analyzing shopper data. And it will reinvest \$2 billion to \$2.2 billion in its business, including \$1 billion in technology and improvements to the supply chain. □

Mutts



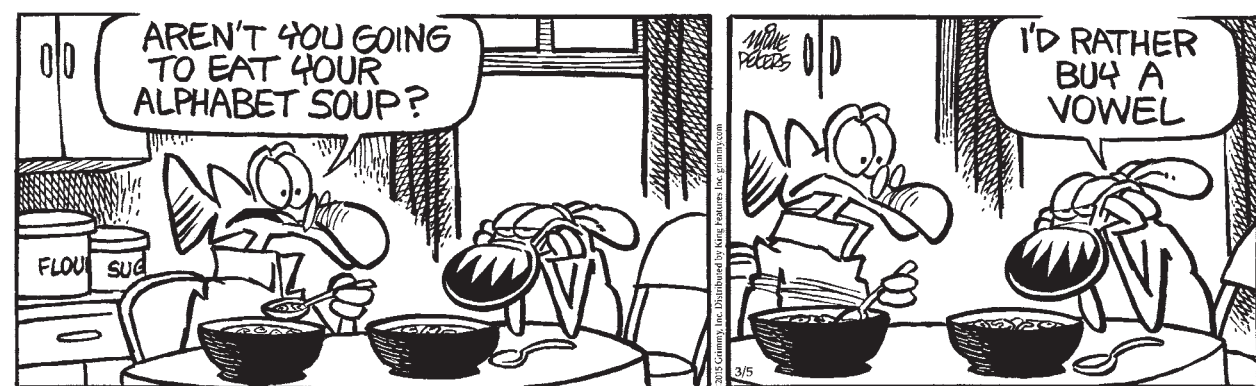
6 Chix



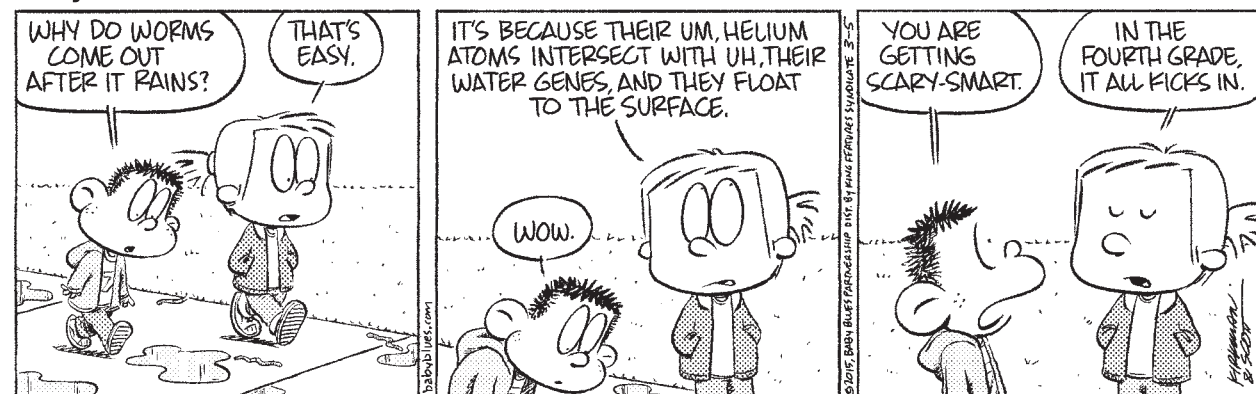
Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

	4		6	8		2	
9					1		6
	2		7				
					8		4
3			5				9
1		5					
				5		4	
8		9					7
	5		7	1		9	

Difficulty Level ★★★

3/05

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

1	4	2	7	3	6	8	9	5
5	7	3	2	9	8	1	4	6
9	8	6	1	4	5	7	2	3
3	1	8	5	2	7	9	6	4
4	9	7	3	6	1	5	8	2
2	6	5	4	8	9	3	1	7
7	2	1	8	5	4	6	3	9
6	5	4	9	1	3	2	7	8
8	3	9	6	7	2	4	5	1

ACROSS

- 1 ___-bodied; healthy and fit
- 5 Sudden muscle contraction
- 10 Horse's gait
- 14 Make progress
- 15 Warm jacket with a hood
- 16 Merry-go-round or roller coaster
- 17 Shade trees
- 18 Fess up
- 19 Top cards
- 20 Wheeler-; wily capitalists
- 22 Most uncanny
- 24 "___ Maria"
- 25 Firebug's crime
- 26 Martini garnish
- 29 "___ Doubtfire"
- 30 Guides; directs
- 34 ___ one's time; wait
- 35 In favor of
- 36 Five and six
- 37 Actor Vigoda
- 38 Annals a law
- 40 Afternoon hour
- 41 Grassy area
- 43 TV sitcom alien
- 44 Smart
- 45 Narrow street
- 46 "Happy Days ___ Here Again!"
- 47 Command
- 48 Disappears gradually
- 50 Take to court
- 51 Indulgent grandma, often
- 54 Cooking wine
- 58 Molten rock
- 59 Stogie
- 61 "___ the night before Christmas..."
- 62 ___ to; willing to consider
- 63 Greek letter
- 64 Dearth
- 65 Breathe heavily
- 66 Deep wide cut
- 67 Peepers

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14				15					16			
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Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

3/5/15

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

CASTS	TWAS	AGOG
ALOHA	OATH	CURE
REARM	TREE	CLAN
SCRUPLES	AVIATE	
	SLAM	BRIDGES
FISHES	AISLE	
ABE	DEALT	ENACT
TEES	RIDES	THAI
EXPAT	RESTS	OLD
	MISER	RUSTLE
ALTERED	FAME	
LEANED	SEPARATE	
LAKE	ASHE	TIBIA
AVES	TOOL	RAINS
YENS	EWES	ALGAE

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3/5/15

DOWN

- 1 Over the hill
- 2 Hay quantity

- 3 Bean type
- 4 Force into servitude
- 5 Tire in the trunk
- 6 Launch sites
- 7 Ulna's location
- 8 Phil Mahre and Picabo Street
- 9 Partners
- 10 Novice
- 11 Houston school
- 12 Inspired poems
- 13 Midterm or final
- 21 Christmas ___; December 24
- 23 Parker House edibles
- 25 In ___; behind in one's payments
- 26 2012 winner
- 27 Written slander
- 28 Just right
- 29 Floor cleaner
- 31 Steer clear of
- 32 Thick; crowded
- 33 Scornful smile
- 35 Some, but not many
- 36 Leprechaun
- 38 Regal
- 39 Schooner drink
- 42 Boldly resistant
- 44 Fight like Hulk Hogan
- 46 Antenna
- 47 "___ Father, Who art in..."
- 49 Knocks down
- 50 Actress Chalke
- 51 Spill one's soup
- 52 Daddy
- 53 Kiln
- 54 Atlas pages
- 55 Put ___; store
- 56 Frilly trimming
- 57 Inquires
- 60 Transcript avg.

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Syria's civil war linked partly to drought, global warming

SETH BORENSTEIN
AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The conflict that has torn Syria apart can be traced, in part, to a record drought worsened by global warming, a new study says.

In what scientists say is one of the most detailed and strongest connections between violence and human-caused climate change, researchers from Columbia University and the University of California Santa Barbara trace the effects of Syria's drought from the collapse of farming, to the migration of 1.5 million farmers to the cities, and then to poverty and civil unrest. Syria's drought started in 2007 and continued until at least 2010 — and perhaps longer. Weather records are more difficult to get in wartime.

"There are various things going on, but you're talking about 1.5 million people migrating from the rural north to the cities," said climate scientist Richard Seager at Columbia, a co-author of the study published Monday in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. "It was a contributing factor to the social unravelling that occurred that eventually led to the civil war."

The study's authors do not claim climate change caused Syria's civil war. It's not that simple. Lead author Colin Kelley at the University of California said



In this Nov. 17, 2014 file photo, boat slips sit on the dry lake bed at Brown's Marina at Folsom Lake, near Folsom Calif.

Associated Press

there are numerous factors involved, including the oppressive Assad regime, an influx of more than 1 million refugees from Iraq, the tumult of the Arab Spring, as well as the drought. Kelley and Seager said they couldn't say which factors were the most important. But, Seager said, this is the "single clearest case" ever presented by scientists of climate change playing a part in conflict because "you can really draw a blow-by-blow account with the numbers."

Kelley and Seager do statistical and computer simulation analysis to connect global warming to the multi-year drought, finding that such dry spells are two to three times more likely because of human-caused heat-trapping carbon dioxide in the atmosphere than under natural

conditions. The connection between climate change and drought in the eastern Mediterranean is one of the most robust in science, said Seager and other scientists. They also show that Syria's temperature has risen by nearly 2 degrees Fahrenheit (1 C) since 1900, which adds to drying through evaporation, and winter rainfall has dropped, too. Three of the four worst multi-year droughts in Syria's history have occurred in the last 30 years, Kelley said.

Martin Hoerling, a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration meteorologist, praised the study and the arguments as "quite compelling."

Hoerling, who has produced studies dismissing global warming's role in some U.S. droughts including California's, said the Kelley paper makes a

strong case for the Syrian drought and the violence being connected to climate change.

David Titley, a Pennsylvania State University scientist and retired Navy admiral, said the paper does a good job linking climate change and drought to "varsity-level instability."

"Reading this paper is like reading the analysis of an airline crash," Titley wrote in an email. "There is a chain of events stretching back over 40 years that has led to the present calamitous conditions. The change in climate, forced by greenhouse gases, was one of the key events in this tragic story."

Robert Danin, who is an expert in Middle Eastern politics as a former State Department official, said it's probably correct to say the drought is one factor in the chaos in Syria. But Danin, now a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, cautions about taking the link too far.

But the link between climate change and conflict has been suggested often in recent years. Last October, then-Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel unveiled a Pentagon report that made exactly that point. "Droughts and crop failures can leave millions of people without any lifeline, and trigger waves of mass migration," Hagel said.

Also last year the Nobel Peace Prize winning Inter-

governmental Panel on Climate Change concluded: "Human security will be progressively threatened as the climate changes."

In a separate study, also published in the same journal, Stanford University climate scientist Noah Diffenbaugh, said the long-time upward trend in California's temperatures have caused the current drought there to be worse, regardless of the initial cause of lack of rain. Diffenbaugh didn't see much of a change in rainfall, but a big one in terms of warming.

In the past, he said, some years when there was little rain, it was cool and that didn't cause droughts that were as severe. The heat didn't add to evaporation and what winter precipitation there was came down as snow, which is easier to store than rain, Diffenbaugh said.

Now, when there's little rain, there is an 80 percent chance the temperature will be high and worsen the drought, Diffenbaugh said. And in the future, that moves up to close to 100 percent, he said.

While they are different places, there is a connection between the two droughts and climate change, Kelley said. It shows that a wealthy United States can bounce back from a big drought and a country like Syria sometimes can't, he said. □

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'The Girl on the Train' is a runaway hit for Paula Hawkins

JILL LAWLESS

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The tedium of the daily commute has turned out to be pretty productive for Paula Hawkins.

Journeys spent staring out railway-carriage windows inspired the former journalist's first thriller, "The Girl on the Train," whose title character glimpses something disturbing from a commuter express.

Published in January, it was billed as "this year's 'Gone Girl'" — a label that has turned out to be much more than publishers' wishful thinking. The book has topped best-seller lists and become a book-club favorite, selling more than 750,000 copies in the U.S. alone. DreamWorks has snapped up the movie rights.

"People keep saying, 'Has it sunk in?' and 'I don't know' is the short answer," Hawkins said. She's just

back from a U.S. publicity tour and sitting in a London restaurant so upmarket that her tea is served with an elaborate pouring contraption whose operation is a bit of a puzzle.

"I'm obviously not posh enough to come here," she said.

The 42-year-old writer says she's still riding the first "crazy rush" of literary success. It's a long way from the Zimbabwe-born author's early days in London as a student and then a journalist, riding trains between homes in outlying neighborhoods and work in the city center.

Hawkins said she has always enjoyed "the odd sense of connection you get as a commuter" with the people and places you pass each day. "And then idly wondering what it would be like if you saw something shocking or sinister."

That's what happens to



Paula Hawkins, author of "The Girl on the Train", poses for a portrait in London, Thursday, Feb. 19, 2015.

Associated Press

the book's protagonist, Rachel, who is trying to numb the pain of a broken marriage with far too much alcohol.

Rachel becomes fascinated with the seemingly golden life of the couple

who live in one particular house she passes. One day, she sees something shocking; soon after, the woman in the house disappears.

Rachel becomes obsessed with solving the mystery, but her blackouts and memory lapses make the truth elusive.

"Her perceptions can't be trusted, not even by herself," Hawkins said. "It's a really good way of drawing people into a story, because you're constantly having to second-guess what you're being told." Readers and critics have responded enthusiastically to Hawkins' teasing narrative. The Washington Post found the book "well written and ingeniously constructed," while the Guardian said "the thriller scene will have to up its game if it's to match Hawkins this year."

But Hawkins acknowledges it was a risk. Rachel is so wayward that some may find her unsympathetic. The novel's two other narrators — Megan, the woman seen from the train, and Anna, the new partner of Rachel's ex — are also more troubled and complex than they first appear. "I have a lot of sympathy for Rachel," Hawkins said. "I thought she was compelling and I thought that she'll be recognizable to a lot of people as someone they know who's just

slipped over the edge." Hawkins feels at home in a landscape of dark secrets and emotional misery — much more at home than she did in her previous guise writing lightweight romances under the pseudonym Amy Silver. She wrote four in all, and says that as the series went on, "the books were getting darker and darker and more miserable, and more terrible things kept happening."

"I find writing the darker side, writing tragedy, a lot easier than writing happiness," she said. "Happiness is just less psychologically compelling, isn't it?"

"The Girl on the Train" is written in crisp, simple prose that effectively conveys a growing sense of menace. Hawkins says the films of Alfred Hitchcock were an influence. "I love that, the slow ratcheting-up and the sense of paranoia and self-doubt."

It is no surprise the novel has been compared to "Gone Girl." Both are tales of suburban psychosis with unreliable female narrators.

Hawkins says she's a big fan of "Gone Girl" author Gillian Flynn, though she thinks the books are very different. She is pleased to be part of a crop of female authors "writing about the really dark side of relationships, marriages gone very sour." □

David Geffen donates \$100 million to Lincoln Center

NEW YORK (AP) — Entertainment industry executive David Geffen has donated \$100 million to New York's Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts.

The performing arts building — long known as Avery Fisher Hall — will be renamed David Geffen Hall in September, Lincoln Center Chair Katherine Farley announced Wednesday.

"As a native New Yorker, I recognize that Lincoln Center is a beacon to artists and musicians around the world," Geffen, a music and movie mogul, and longtime philanthropist, said in the statement. "To be involved with such a beloved and iconic institution is deeply satisfying." Lincoln Center announced in November that it would take Fisher's name off its concert hall and resell the naming rights to help finance a \$500 million renovation. The renovation scheduled to start in 2019 was an-



This March 15, 2010 file photo shows music and movie mogul David Geffen speaking during the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremony in New York.

Associated Press

nounced after the Fisher family agreed to accept \$15 million to drop the name from the hall where the New York Philharmonic plays.

One precedent close at hand is the former New York State Theater at Lincoln Center, renamed the David H. Koch Theater in 2008 after the oil-and-gas billionaire pledged \$100 million.

Avery Fisher Hall was named for Fisher, a violinist and high-fidelity pioneer who founded the Fisher Radio Company, after he financed an earlier renovation in 1973.

He died in 1994. Under the agreement reached with his three children, the renovated concert hall will feature prominent tributes to Fisher. The family will stay involved. □



In this March 2, 2014 file photo, Leonardo DiCaprio arrives at the Oscars at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

DiCaprio partners with Netflix for series of documentaries

NEW YORK (AP) — Leonardo DiCaprio is partnering with Netflix for a series of documentaries he will produce for the streaming service.

Netflix announced Wednesday that DiCaprio and his production company, Appian Way, have signed a first-look deal with Netflix for nonfiction projects. The company says DiCaprio and Netflix will seek to develop and acquire documentaries and docu-series "with partial focus on environmental and conservation themes."

DiCaprio teamed with Netflix last year to release the Oscar-nominated documentary "Virunga." In a statement, DiCaprio said "Virunga" "sparked a shared vision" between him and the streaming service.

The deal adds to a growing stable of Hollywood talent Netflix has lured to its expanding original film operations. Along with an earlier deal with Adam Sandler, Netflix recently acquired "Beasts of No Nation" by "True Detective" director Cary Fukunaga. □

Sara Gilbert welcomes baby boy with wife Linda Perry

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Sara Gilbert shared the news of her new baby on "The Talk."

Co-host Julie Chen announced on Monday's episode that Gilbert welcomed a son over the weekend. It's Gilbert's first with wife Linda Perry.

Chen said Rhodes Emilio Gilbert Perry was born Saturday. Fellow host Sharon Osbourne showed a photo of the newborn.

Gilbert and Perry were married in March 2014.

The 40-year-old Gilbert may be best known for her starring role on the long-running TV comedy "Roseanne." She's also a creator and co-host of "The Talk."



In this March 15, 2014 file photo, Linda Perry, left, and Sara Gilbert arrive at L.A. Gay and Lesbian Center "An Evening with Women" Kick Off Concert Event in West Hollywood, Calif.

Associated Press

Perry is a singer, songwriter, producer and former front woman of the rock group 4 Non Blondes. Gilbert has two children from a previous relationship. □

Review:

'A Kim Jong-Il Production' is a fascinating tale

CARA ANNA
Associated Press

Here's an easy one: North Korea's Kim Jong Il orders a famous South Korean film director and his actress wife kidnapped and brought into the country to remake a tepid film industry with dreams of international glory. Of course you should read this.



This photo provided by Flat-iron Books/Macmillan shows the cover of the book, "A Kim Jong-Il Production," by author, Paul Fischer.

Associated Press

People interested in North Korea have been having a book bonanza. The past few years have brought "Dear Leader," about a North Korean poet laureate's dramatic defection; the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel "The Orphan Master's Son," which synthesizes the strangest aspects of the country; "Without You, There is No Us," Suki Kim's memoir of teaching in North Korea; and now "A Kim Jong-Il Production," about the kidnapping and eventual escape of director Shin Sang-Ok and his lifelong companion, actress Choi Eun-Hee.

With North Korea as sealed-off and opaque to the outside world as possible, author Paul Fischer has relied heavily on the couple's memoir of their years inside what they described as a surreal world, directed by a man with a bouffant hairdo and 5-inch platform shoes. Kim Jong Il, said to be terrified of flying, brought the world to him through movies. North Korean embassies

had been tasked with copying thousands of film prints and sending them home to be translated and dubbed for his personal viewing. Kim despaired at his own country's clunky movies and, a fan of James Bond films, apparently came up with a dramatic solution: First the actress Choi, then the director Shin, were lured to Hong Kong, where they were separately seized and taken by boat to North Korea.

It took five years for them to be reunited. After escape attempts, harsh prison life and a hunger strike by Shin, and after a series of guarded luxury guesthouses and brushes with other beautiful foreign captives by Choi, the couple finally learned of each other's fate in the middle of a lavish party hosted by Kim.

"Jong-Il hovered nearby, an enormous grin on his face, looking like a kid who had just pulled off the most improbable prank," Fischer writes. "'Well, go ahead and hug each other!' he said. 'Why are you just standing there?'"

The reunited couple was soon deep into a secret, multilayered performance, pretending to be won over by their host and transforming North Korea's film industry while quietly taping at least one conversation with Kim and planning their eventual escape on a rare journey to the West.

Kim, they decided, was the kind of man they had met before "on a smaller scale: talented but not quite talented enough, powerful, jealous, insecure, and boastful; with an overinflated sense of their own importance in the world, a short temper, and an obsessive need to micromanage. Kim was, they thought, the archetypal film producer."

They also found him, at times, disarming and even charming.

This is where the book leaves readers seeking more. It takes 86 pages for "A Kim Jong-Il Production" to reach

the first of the two abductions, and considering that the couple's eventual memoir ran to 900 pages, one wishes for more details about aspects of North Korea that few other outsiders will ever see or survive. (Their memoir, Fischer notes, was never translated into English.)

What was it like, for example, for the couple on their bizarre one-day visit to London for a film festival, surrounded by North Korean minders, before they were whisked back behind the Iron Curtain into communist territory? As the rare Korean speakers among numerous foreigners abducted by North Korean agents, what were their conversations like with their colleagues on the film sets and with people elsewhere in Pyongyang, and were there ever any flashes of skepticism or dissent?

And of course, how did this glamorous couple carefully win Kim's trust over years of parties, phone conversations and film viewings? What gossip and jokes did they hear, who else was among the Pyongyang elite, and did the couple ever get a glimpse of future leader Kim Jong Un?

But not to complain. "A Kim Jong-Il Production" is a fascinating look at a world that almost none of us, aside from perhaps Dennis Rodman, has seen or will ever see. Our guides are nervy, classy and, crucially, fluent in the local language, and they've given us an often breathtaking look at how a country whose collapse has been predicted for decades has endured.

This is also a complicated and satisfying love story between two strong-willed people, and surprisingly funny at the highest moment of drama: "They ran as fast as they could, reached the embassy door at the same time, and tried to shove each other out of the way in their rush to reach safety." Choi later teased Shin about it, and he blushed. □

What Greece Won



PAUL KRUGMAN
© 2015 New York Times

After much drama, the new Greek government finally reached a deal with its creditors in late February. Last week, the Greeks filled in some details on how they intend to meet the terms. So how did it go?

Well, if you were to believe many of the news reports and opinion pieces of the past few days, you'd think that it was a disaster - that it was a "surrender" on the part of Syriza, the new ruling coalition in Athens. Some factions within Syriza apparently think so, too. But it wasn't. On the contrary, Greece came out of the negotiations pretty well, although the big fights are still to come. And by doing OK, Greece has done the rest of Europe a favor.

To make sense of what happened, you need to understand that the main issue of contention involves just one number: the size of the Greek primary surplus, the difference between government revenues and government expenditures not counting interest on the debt.

The primary surplus measures the resources that Greece is actually transferring to its creditors. Everything else, including the notional size of the debt - which is a more or less arbitrary number at this point, with little bearing on the amount anyone expects Greece to pay - matters only to the extent that it affects the primary surplus Greece is forced to run.

For Greece to run any surplus at all - given the depression-level slump that it's in and the effect of that depression on revenues - is a remarkable achievement, the result of incredible sacrifices. Nonetheless, Syriza has always been clear that it intends to keep running a modest primary surplus.

If you are angry that the negotiations didn't make room for a full reversal of austerity, a turn toward Keynesian fiscal stimulus, you weren't paying attention. The question instead was whether Greece would be forced to impose still more austerity. The previous Greek government had agreed to a program under which the primary surplus would triple over the next few years, at immense cost to the nation's economy and people.

Why would any government agree to such a thing? Fear. Essentially, successive leaders in Greece and other debtor nations haven't dared to challenge

extreme creditor demands, for fear that they would be punished - that the creditors would cut off their cash flow or, worse yet, implode their banking system if they balked at ever-harsher budget cuts.

So did the current Greek government back down and agree to aim for those economy-busting surpluses? No, it didn't. In fact, Greece won new flexibility for this year, and the language about future surpluses was obscure. It could mean anything or nothing. And the creditors did not pull the plug. Instead, they made financing available to carry Greece through the next few months. That is, if you like, putting Greece on a short leash, and it means that the big fight over the future is yet to come.

But the Greek government didn't succumb to the bum's rush, and that in itself is a kind of victory.

Why, then, all the negative reporting? To be fair, fiscal policy isn't the only issue. There were and are also arguments about things like privatization of public assets, where Syriza has agreed not to reverse deals already made, and labor market regulation, where some of the "structural reform" of the austerity era will apparently stand. Syriza also agreed to crack down on tax evasion, although why collecting taxes is supposed to be a defeat for a leftist government is a mystery to me.

Still, nothing that just happened justifies the pervasive rhetoric of failure. Actually, my sense is that we're seeing an unholy alliance here between left-leaning writers with unrealistic expectations and the business press, which likes the story of Greek debacle because that's what is supposed to happen to uppity debtors. But there was no debacle. Provisionally, at least, Greece seems to have ended the cycle of ever-more-savage austerity.

And, as I said, in so doing, Greece has done the rest of Europe a favor. Remember, in the background of the Greek drama is a European economy that, despite some positive numbers lately, still seems to be sliding into a deflationary trap. Europe as a whole desperately needs to end austerity madness, and this week there have been some slightly positive signs.

Notably, the European Commission has decided not to fine France and Italy for exceeding their deficit targets.

Levying these fines would have been insane given market realities; France can borrow for five years at an interest rate of 0.002 percent, that's right, 0.002 percent.

But we've seen a lot of similar insanity in recent years. And you have to wonder whether the Greek story played a role in this outbreak of reasonableness.

Meanwhile, the first real debtor revolt against austerity is off to a decent start, even if nobody believes it. What's the Greek for "Keep calm and carry on"? □



Bloomberg Sees a Way on Keystone



JOE NOCERA
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No one can question Michael Bloomberg's climate change bona fides. As mayor of New York, he declared that cities had to lead the way in reducing the threat of climate change, and he strove to make New York greener. He has donated millions of dollars to the effort to shut down coal-fired power plants. He endorsed President Barack Obama for re-election in 2012 primarily because the president, he said, "has taken major steps to reduce our carbon consumption." Most recently, he was named the U.N. secretary-general's special envoy for cities and climate change, a position he appears to be taking quite seriously. Bloomberg is also a supremely pragmatic man, who prides himself on not letting ideology get in the way of finding practical solutions to difficult problems. Thus it was that earlier this week - after Obama vetoed a bill passed by Congress that would have forced him to approve the Keystone XL oil pipeline - Bloomberg wrote an article for Bloomberg View, his media company's opinion publication, proposing an idea for breaking the logjam over the pipeline, which would transport oil from the tar sands of Alberta, Canada, to refineries in the Gulf of Mexico.

His idea is that the Obama administration should negotiate directly with the Canadian government, and come up with a cli-

mate pact that would more than offset the emissions that would be generated - indeed, are already being generated - by mining the oil from the sands. Though it is unlikely to satisfy the partisans on both sides, it is a wonderfully sensible solution.

"Keystone has become irrationally significant," Bloomberg told me when I spoke to him about his idea. "Environmentalists overstate the danger of the pipeline to the environment," he continued, "while those who say the economics would be significant are overstating as well." Bloomberg believes we would all be better off if we stripped the pipeline of its symbolism and dealt with it more realistically.

Many in the environmental movement have taken the position that building Keystone - and thus allowing for increased production of tar sands oil - would be ruinous for the planet. Not only would it further the world's dependence on fossil fuels, but, if it enabled the full exploitation of the tar sands, it would emit so much carbon that it would be "game over" for the planet, in the memorable words of James Hansen, an anti-Keystone scientist. As I've written before, these claims are wildly overstated; indeed, the Canadian government likes to note that, in 2012, eight states, starting with Texas, had higher emissions from their coal-fired power plants than Canada did from its oil sands. And transporting oil by train, as is currently being done, is far more dangerous than sending it through a state-of-the-art pipeline.

At the same time, the Republicans who want to use Obama's veto as a symbol that he is willing to forego good jobs to please his environmental supporters are equally wrongheaded. Most of the American jobs related to Keystone would involve building the pipeline. Once it was up and running, the number of new jobs it would create would be minimal. There is a third entity for whom Keystone has become a symbol: the conservative government of

Stephen Harper, the Canadian prime minister, which has pushed for approval of the pipeline by the United States with an urgency that has sometimes felt a little desperate. In 2011, Harper said that approval of the pipeline should be a "no brainer" for the U.S. Canadian officials have threatened that if the U.S. doesn't approve the pipeline, the oil would likely go to China instead. And it has treated Obama's reluctance to make a decision on the pipeline as a reflection of American-Canadian relations, rather than what it is: an issue of American politics. There are many Canadians who believe that the Harper government has badly mishandled the Keystone issue.

At the same time, Harper's government has not exactly been leading the climate change charge. His administration pulled Canada out of the Kyoto Protocol, the landmark 1997 agreement that committed countries that signed on to mandatory emissions reductions. "We are known around the world as being climate change obstructionists," said Peter McKenna, a political scientist at the University of Prince Edward Island. "Harper always equates getting serious about climate change as having a negative effect on the Canadian economy."

It is this state of affairs that Bloomberg seeks to exploit. Late last year, the Obama administration announced a climate change agreement with China, which commits both parties to lowering their greenhouse gas emissions. Because Harper so badly wants the Keystone pipeline to be approved, the U.S. government has tremendous leverage, says Bloomberg, to cut the same kind of deal with Canada. After which, the president could approve the Keystone XL oil pipeline with a clear conscience, knowing that he had mitigated the worst of its effects on the planet. Pragmatism, for a change, would upend ideology, and we could finally stop talking about this fractious pipeline. □

A Chicken's Tour of the Mediterranean

DAVID TANIS

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A good cook needs an assortment of chicken recipes up his or her sleeve. It's fair to say most carnivores like chicken, but even chicken fans prefer a bit of variety, a break from the familiar roasted, fried, grilled.

Braising chicken is a technique to master. The simple process of browning the meat, then adding liquid and gently simmering, ensures tenderness and succulence.

Most people I know agree the thigh is the choicest part of the bird under most circumstances. I find chicken thighs make the best braises, and I recommend using skin-on bone-in thighs for the best flavor. (In these days of skinless boneless everything and fear of fat, these unadulterated thighs are scarcer than before, but persevere; they can be found.) One of the best chicken braises I know uses a broadly Mediterranean approach. The classic combination of chicken with lemon and olives is found throughout the region, but a minor tweaking of the basic recipe is all it takes to give this braise a regional accent.

The example given here is Italianate: rosemary, garlic, fennel seed and red pepper. Marinate the thighs, surround them with lemon wedges, and brown them in the oven. Add a handful of green and black olives and a ladleful of chicken broth. Simmer a bit. The result: earthy, herbaceous, lemony. Serve with polenta.

To give the same dish a more Provençal profile, use thyme sprigs rather than rosemary and choose oil-cured black or tiny niçoise olives. Serve with potatoes or egg noodles. For a North African feel, use large green olives and add toasted ground cumin seeds and hot paprika. Serve with flatbread or couscous.

As for lemons, any kind may be used. Meyer lemons are nice, since they



Braised chicken thighs with lemon and olives, in New York. Braising -- the simple process of browning the meat, then adding liquid and gently simmering -- ensures tenderness and succulence. (Evan Sung/The New York Times)

are sweeter than others and the soft skin is mild enough to eat. But ordinary Eureka lemons are fine, thinly sliced, as are rinsed salt-preserved lemons cut in small cubes.

Of course, you should try to get the best chicken you can. Choose organic, free-range, heritage birds when possible. Even at \$4 a pound, that's far less expensive than other prime cuts of meat, and you are more likely to get flavorful chicken if it is of noble provenance. Free-range birds generally have firmer muscles than cheaper "factory style" birds. If you have tasted chicken in other countries, you know that firm meat and flavor go hand in hand.

Once you are hooked on the chicken-lemon-olive theme, you'll find many more ways to practice it. Imagine, for instance, a chicken sandwich smeared with a garlicky

chopped olive tapenade and a dab of bright lemony mayonnaise. You get the idea.

MEDITERRANEAN BRAISED CHICKEN

Time: 1 3/4 hours

8 chicken thighs, skin-on and bone-in, about 3 1/2 pounds

Salt and pepper

1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes

6 garlic cloves, minced

1/2 teaspoon crushed fennel seeds

1 tablespoon roughly chopped rosemary

1 tablespoon olive oil

2 Meyer lemons, cut in wedges

1 cup flavorful olives with pits, a mixture of black and green, about 1 pound

1 cup chicken broth

3 tablespoons chopped parsley

1. Pat chicken thighs dry with paper towels. Season well with salt and pepper

and place in an earthenware baking dish in one layer, skin side up. Sprinkle with red pepper, garlic, fennel and rosemary and drizzle with olive oil. Rub seasoning into thighs on all sides. Tuck lemon wedges here and there. Let marinate for 15 minutes. Heat oven to 375 degrees.

2. Put baking dish in oven, uncovered, and roast until skin browns lightly, about 20 minutes. Scatter olives evenly over chicken and add broth. Cover tightly and bake for 1 hour, until meat is very tender when probed with a skewer.

3. Remove thighs and lemon wedges and arrange on a platter. Keep warm. Pour pan juices into a saucepan and quickly skim fat from surface. Over high heat, simmer rapidly until reduced by half. Spoon juices over chicken, sprinkle with parsley and serve.

Yield: 4 to 6 servings

And to Drink ...

The reflexive choice for this braised Mediterranean-style dish would be a lively dry white, from the Mediterranean or beyond. Cassis, a small appellation outside Marseille, would be ideal, but so would whites from Corsica, Sardinia and Santorini, or fianos and falanghinas from Campania. From beyond, perhaps village-level Chablis; dry, crisp sauvignon blancs; and, of course, Provençal rosés. All these will echo the citrus and herbal elements of this dish. For contrast, consider vivacious reds, like gamays from the Loire or good Beaujolais-Villages. Try blends from the Languedoc, if they are not oaky, or lighter-bodied Sicilian reds like frappato or Cerasuolo di Vittoria. I would never say no to sherry; an orthodox approach calls for Amontillado, but for me, make it fino.

- ERIC ASIMOV